Vouchers: Gore's Wrong, Lieberman's Right

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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SEPTEMBER 11, 2000

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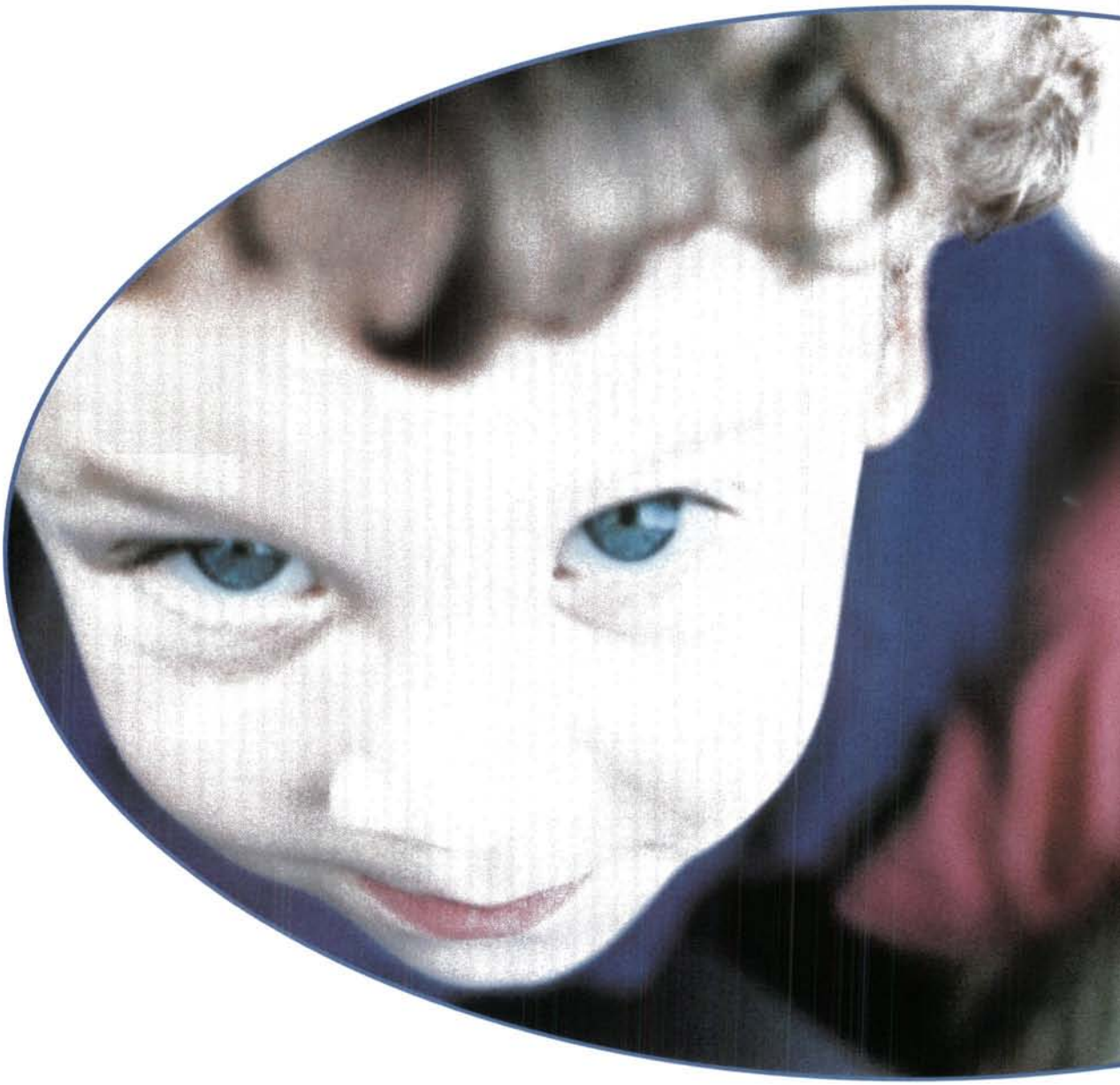

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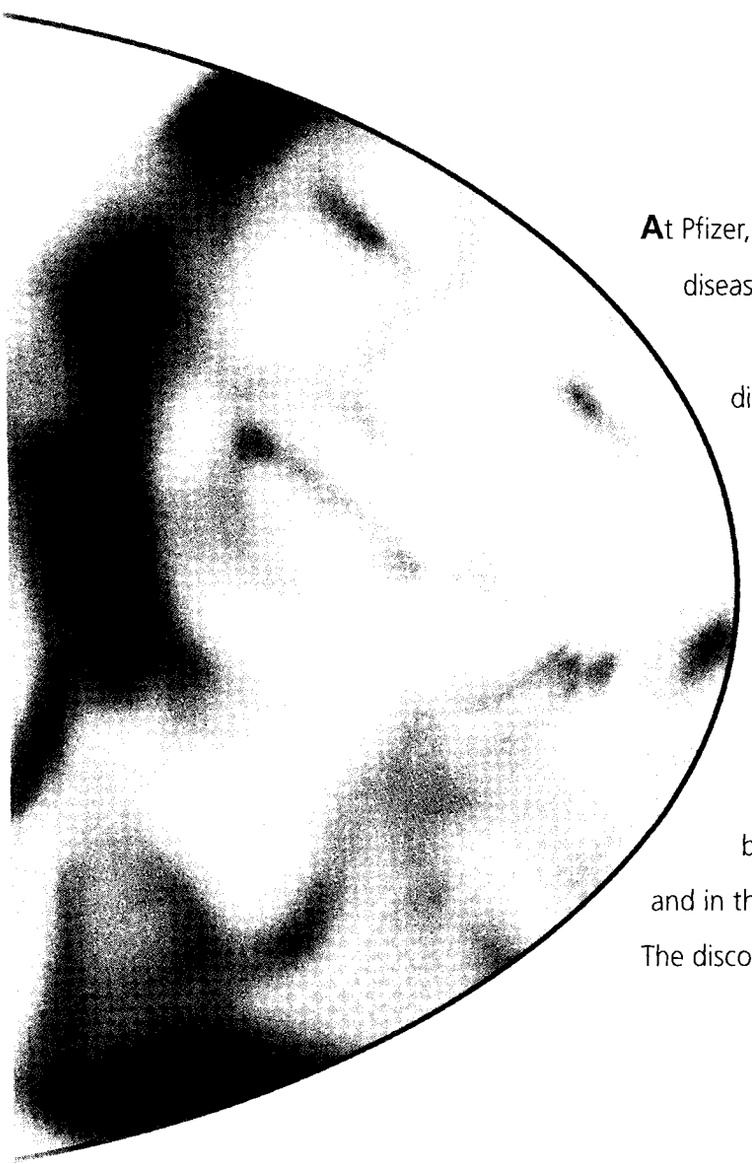

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CORRESPONDENCE

Finger-pointing

TO THE EDITORS:
In "The Myth of Fingerprints" (July 31), Gregg Easterbrook takes the contrarian position that genetic evidence, rather than exonerating innocent persons, "will result in a steady stream of inmates about whose guilt we can be almost entirely certain." And opponents of capital punishment should worry, he says, for "suspicions that the innocent are being executed will [grow weaker] as DNA testing spreads."

Poppycock. The significance of DNA testing lies not so much in its ability to exonerate but in its ability to shed light on the overall reliability of the judicial process. And what we have learned from the important work of Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld (among others) is that, in the absence of genetic evidence, the system leading from police investigation to incarceration is frighteningly unreliable.

It is true, as Easterbrook insists, that DNA tests will confirm the guilt of convicts unlucky enough to leave genetic material at the scene of the crime. But the perpetrators of the vast majority of serious (even capital) crimes, not including rape, do not leave genetic fingerprints. Given that DNA evidence provides us with good reason to believe that the judicial process is unreliable, it follows that we have good reason to believe that a significant number of people convicted of these crimes are innocent. This should be more than enough to turn all right-minded citizens into death-penalty abolitionists.

SAMUEL C. RICKLESS
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida

TO THE EDITORS:
Gregg Easterbrook reports that the American Civil Liberties Union is "fighting efforts to more effectively use genetic evidence . . . on the grounds that chromosome material deserves privacy protection because it might reveal such things as sexual orientation."

The ACLU supports privacy protection of DNA data for many reasons, but we have always rejected the thinly veiled racism and bigotry behind genetic determinism and the eugenics movement, including the search for the so-called gay gene. In fact, in my recent testimony on the issue before Congress, I cite the existence of these debunked theories as one of many reasons to be wary of calls for massive DNA databases.

Easterbrook also claims that "the main reason the ACLU seems to fear DNA fingerprinting is that it works." To begin with, he makes a basic error in referring to the collection of DNA samples as "genetic fingerprinting." Fingerprints are two-dimensional representations of the physical attributes of our fingertips. But the amount of personal and private data contained in a DNA specimen, in the form of blood or saliva, makes its seizure extraordinarily broad in scope. The DNA samples that are being held by federal, state, and local governments can provide insights into the most personal family relationships and the most intimate workings of the human body, including the likelihood of the occurrence of thousands of genetic conditions and diseases. Indeed, it trivializes DNA data collection to call it a genetic fingerprint; in Massachusetts, lawmakers have specifically rejected that term.

DNA, the Death Penalty's Best Friend GREGG EASTERBROOK
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Bush and Gore's Convention Nightmares MICHELLE COTTLE
The Networks' Deep Sleep THE EDITORS
GHOST IN THE MACHINE
His father made Chicago run like clockwork. Can Bill Daley do the same for Al Gore?
Gore 2000
DAHLIA LITHWICK
Mario Cuomo, Cynic

In any case, the ACLU is not wary of DNA collection in and of itself but of a government that has betrayed our trust—and our privacy—time and again. From the use of census data to intern Japanese-Americans during World War II to Watergate to Filegate, law enforcement agencies have a sorry history of abusing access to private information. The public should be deeply concerned about the potential abuse and authorized misuse of any new database.

The ACLU freely concedes that collecting DNA samples from every person who is arrested may be an "effective" way of catching criminals. But such wholesale collections of DNA are intrusive, unreasonable searches that violate the Fourth Amendment and similar state laws. Finding such objections "nonsensical," Easterbrook asserts that the "routine" DNA collection of anyone who is arrested "will be good for public safety and make our legal system more just." More just than what? Thanks to the police's rampant racial profiling, African Americans, Latinos, and other minorities are already subject to arrest in grossly disproportionate numbers. Are they supposed to feel better knowing that their DNA will be stored indefinitely?

Given the rapid growth of technology, genetic testing's practical problems may be solved in the next few years. But the constitutional problems with mass DNA testing will remain as long as this country calls itself a democracy.

BARRY STEINHARDT
Associate Director
American Civil Liberties Union
New York, New York

GREGG EASTERBROOK REPLIES:
Barry Steinhardt begins by denouncing the idea that sexuality can be detected from DNA samples. But my article said the same: specifically, "genetic markers don't reveal anything about IQ or disease disposition or sexual orientation." Steinhardt then argues that police should not keep DNA information because the government cannot be trusted. Maybe, but this concern is traditionally addressed through Fourth Amendment standards, open jury trials, and so on. DNA evidence is not fundamentally different from any other kind of evidence in the possibility that it might be abused by bad government. Genetic tests *are* fundamentally different in their potential for catching criminals, which, after reading this letter, still seems to me the ACLU's basis for objection.

Grateful undead

TO THE EDITORS:
Joshua Micah Marshall claims that European countries are less democratic than the United States because they have abolished the death penalty against the run of public opinion. I cannot speak for other countries, but in Britain capital punishment is, for the most part, one of the extremely rare issues on which members of Parliament have traditionally been allowed a free vote. That is because the taking of human life is viewed so seriously that it is deemed inappropriate to subject it to party politics. Elected representatives have therefore been permitted to vote not for what their constituents want but according to their consciences.

I am grateful to live in a country in which the taking of human life is not used for political gain and in which the government has shown moral leadership by protecting its people from their worst instincts instead of pandering to them.

SHELAGH SIMMONS
Southsea, England

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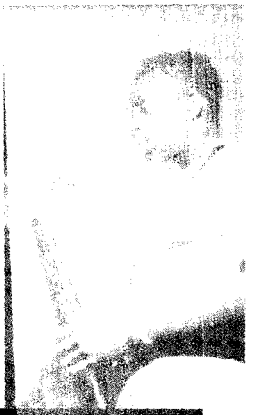

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Paper Tiger

HAVING WORKED FOR a couple of years at the Labor Department, I feel it my solemn, if solitary, duty to reflect upon the state of American labor on the day designated for its commemoration. And what springs to mind is not an image of Mother Jones raising hell but a scene in Douglas Adams's *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. It's the one in which the galactic hitchhikers chance upon a spaceship loaded with frozen human bodies, each labeled by occupation. Among them are personnel officers, public relations executives, management consultants, and telephone sanitizers. This is the B Ark, explains the ship's captain; it was dispatched five years earlier from a doomed planet. Arks A and C were to follow: A would carry the planet's scientists, artists, and other "achievers"; C would bear "the people who did the actual work." Only it turns out that nobody really remembers just what calamity befell the former planet, nobody has heard from the other arks, nobody knows where this ship is headed, and, oh yes, the B Ark is programmed not to land but to *crash*....

For years, of course, the American workforce has been looking more and more like B-class cargo. And, while nobody proposes packing our surplus analysts and managers onto the next space shuttle, for years populist critics have fretted that this "hollowing-out" of the American workforce would leave the country ill-prepared to compete in the global economy, as rivals from Asia and a unified Europe controlled production of everything from clothes and cosmetics to steel and autos. Of course, in the last few years the buoyancy of the U.S. economy—generated, in part, by the consumer power of all those lawyers, stockbrokers, managers, and counselors—has pushed these concerns off center stage. But patches of discontent remain: it's one reason protesters took to the streets in Seattle and Washington, D.C., and it helps explain the surprisingly strong support for Ralph Nader's presidential candidacy. And, while these protesters may take their cause too far, there's something to their line of argument.

Consider how our changing workforce has contributed to the increasing trade deficit—the discrepancy between what we want and what we produce. In May, for example, Americans bought $37 billion more in "hard goods"—that is, things like appliances, computers, and toys—than we sold abroad. The gap would have been greater were it not for continuing demand for American-made aircraft and, of course, weapons. We did net some $6 billion on sales of services (including airline tickets), though that number has been shrinking. The remaining $31 billion monthly trade deficit—plus interest owed on past borrowing—is covered by exports of what is currently one of America's most valued products: paper. Financial paper, that is: stocks, bonds, deeds to fixed assets, and, especially, government-guaranteed paper such as Treasury bonds.

Unfortunately, Treasury bonds are in increasingly short supply, thanks to mounting budget surpluses. Fannie Mae's and Freddie Mac's mortgage-backed securities are touted as a good substitute for security-seeking foreigners, though lately some have questioned how risk-free they really are. Should foreigners lose their appetite for U.S. stocks and bonds, they will start to dump their excess dollar holdings. A falling dollar would make our exports more competitive—assuming we still produce enough things other countries want to buy. But it would make the imports we're hooked on more expensive, while probably throwing a bunch of retailers and other middlemen out of work. In other words, the trade deficit would remain, but it would hurt us more economically.

Other countries might let us keep running up big tabs; after all, if we don't buy their goods, who will? But there's another problem with the hollowing-out of the American workforce. While we have no shortage of people wanting to be movie stars, moguls, lobbyists, or, for that matter, journalists, we do seem to be running low on people willing to do some of society's less glamorous work—work that typically requires both skill and some manual labor. For example, just as baby-boomers are starting to feel a little creaky in the bones, nurses and other health care workers are suddenly in short supply in the United States. And, while you can contract out computer programming to India or Ireland, a nurse has to be by your bedside.

To remedy the problem, some hospitals now offer signing bonuses to registered nurses. Others promise perks like child care, housekeeping, or lawn services. But you can't produce a nurse overnight—nor a skilled machinist. Just ask the managers who run Tecumseh Products Company, an engine maker in Wisconsin. They are desperate for highly skilled toolmakers, electricians, and so on. But high schools around the country are shutting down vocational training programs and instead installing Web-linked computers that will help train knowledge workers for the new economy. "We still need people who will get their hands dirty along with using their heads—and enjoy it," says David Eberhardt, the plant's manager. "Not everybody is going to sit in front of a terminal and keyboard." In recognition, the state of Wisconsin recently launched a program to resuscitate and popularize technical training in high schools and beyond. But other states have been slow to follow.

Our flexible economy, with its high levels of immigration, will no doubt find some way to handle the shortages in these now unfashionable occupations. But two factors may conspire to keep our middleman economy going. One is that, come 2015 or so, Social Security will start redeeming the trillions of dollars in IOUs its trust fund has accumulated. When that happens, the government will need to start borrowing from the public again. That, in turn, will boost production of one of our most successful exports, Treasury bonds, thus sustaining the current imbalances. Second, the competitiveness of workers in developing countries may soon diminish—not because their wages or working conditions will improve, making them less cost-effective employees, but because they, too, may start to gravitate toward middleman work. At their summit meeting this summer, the nations of the G-8 magnanimously decided to launch a "dot force" that will bring to the globe's downtrodden masses not adequate food, shelter, or even education but Internet hookups. That should take their minds off their work.

But, at some point, America's B Ark is bound to get too crowded. We will need workers, here in the United States, who build things and take care of people as opposed to simply shifting around information and money. So this Labor Day, middlemen of America, don't unite. You may have nothing to gain but a ticket to oblivion.

JODIE ALLEN

JODIE ALLEN is a senior writer at *U.S. News & World Report* covering political economy.

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Easy Choice

WHEN AL GORE CHOSE Joe Lieberman to be his running mate, Democrats praised the Connecticut senator's bipartisanship. And then they rushed to suppress its every manifestation. On school vouchers in particular, Lieberman, facing a barrage of friendly fire, has beaten a hasty retreat. "If you ask me personally, I'm still for a test of vouchers," Lieberman confessed to CNN on August 13. "But I understand how this works when you are vice president." We understand too—when the presidential candidate says, "Our administration will be opposed to private school vouchers," the vice presidential candidate keeps his mouth shut. Too bad. Because, in this case, the presidential candidate is wrong and the vice presidential candidate is right.

This magazine supports vouchers for empirical reasons, not ideological ones. Many on the right believed in "school choice" years ago, before its efficacy had ever been tested, for the same reason they believe in privatizing the post office—because the free market is supposedly always preferable to government control. We don't view vouchers as a matter of faith; we don't believe that a "public school monopoly" is in principle a bad thing, and we don't believe in vouchers for everyone. California's current voucher initiative, for instance, would award any parent, regardless of income, $4,000 per year toward private-school tuition—money that would come out of the public school system. By contrast, we think that any voucher system should be accompanied by more government funding for public education, not less, so that the majority of poor students do not suffer for the benefit of the motivated few. What's more, we see no reason to subsidize well-off parents who are already sending their children to private schools, as the California proposal would do.

But it has become painfully obvious that conservatives are not the only ones who care more about dogma than about vouchers' actual effects on children's lives. The response of the teachers' unions to vouchers is to defend endlessly the principle of public schools—when, by their implacable opposition to virtually every effort to hold the public schools accountable, they themselves ensure that many of those schools make a mockery of the ideals upon which they were founded. We do not fully know whether vouchers will work. But the Democratic Party must no longer be afraid to find out.

That is the idea behind the limited voucher plan Lieberman proposed. Vouchers would be capped by income, limited in number, and restricted to communities with the worst schools. The hope is that experiments with vouchers, far from dismantling bad public schools, would help resurrect them. And there is some evidence that they might. At Milwaukee's Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, which was losing students and funding to neighboring private schools through the city's voucher program, county administrators hired a new principal who instituted an intensive reading program that raised the school's scores, once among the lowest in town, to above the city's average. In Escambia County, Florida, where failing test scores at two schools triggered the state's voucher program, principals initiated small-group tutoring, required parent-teacher conferences, and extended the school year by 30 days. By year's end, both schools had raised their test scores enough to remove the voucher threat.

The poor students who have used vouchers to escape failing schools also appear to have benefited. Over two years, researchers at the University of Wisconsin, Georgetown, and Harvard tracked test scores among low-income students in three cities who used vouchers to attend private schools. African American students who attended private schools scored six percentile points higher than corresponding students who remained in public schools.

Democrats used to say you can't make anti-poverty policy without listening to the poor. Fair enough. Last year, a poll conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that 72 percent of African Americans in low-income households supported vouchers. Voucher programs in Milwaukee, Cleveland, Dayton, New York, and Washington, D.C., have been inundated with applications, even though most of these programs require a significant supplementary payment. Last year, 1.25 million low-income children applied for the 40,000 vouchers offered by the private Children's Scholarship Fund. All these people may be misguided. Vouchers' widespread use should be based on systematic, unimpeachable evidence, not assumptions—even the assumptions of the people most directly affected. It's possible that the inner-city poor are wrong about the appropriate remedies for their plight. But surely America's dispossessed, their children systematically robbed of a decent education, at least deserve to find out. ■

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NOTEBOOK

FAR FROM CAMPAIGN TRAIL, BUT CENTRAL TO HIM, CLINTON TRUDGES ON

President Forges "Special Bond" With People of Turkmenistan

ASHKHABAD, Turkmenistan, Aug. 30 — There was the first visit, before he learned to undulate, before he ever slipped a traditional robe over his suit. But even then President Clinton, in search of a legacy, knew he needed the people of Turkmenistan. And the people of Turkmenistan needed him. On that first trip, the globetrotter from Hope mused about being remembered as the leader who brought peace and stability to the mountains of the southeast corner of Central Asia. "I hope that my visit here will encourage a new Trans-Caspian Renaissance," he told a special session of the Turkmen parliament.

Since that session three months ago, born from the President's desire to keep a low domestic profile during his vice president's campaign, Air Force One has circled the globe. It has touched down in Nigeria, Tanzania, Egypt and Colombia. But it hasn't stopped anywhere more often than Ashkhabad, the capital of Turkmenistan, where Clinton has landed six times. The President has thrown himself into resolving Turkmenistan's dispute with neighboring Azerbaijan over the aggressive tactics of Turkmen fishermen. He has become a fixture on the local scene. Nowadays, when he walks through Ashkhabad's ancient bazaar or plays backgammon with his new buddy Boris Shikhmyradov, the Turkmen President's special envoy for the Caspian Sea, Mr. Clinton hardly turns a head.

On this historic seventh visit, he has returned to promise an additional $100,000 in microloans to herdsmen seeking to manufacture fiberoptic cable from mountain-goat hair. Wearing his favorite traditional Turkmen robe, he addressed a meeting of clerics, declaring, "You're doing such important work. I'm so proud of you."

Inspired by his continuing warm reception in Central Asia, the President has added to his trip in recent days. At the Gore campaign's suggestion, he plans to fly over the North Pole to examine the possible effects of

Continued on Page A17

WHEN TOO MANY IS NOT ENOUGH: As Gregg Easterbrook notes elsewhere in this issue ("Apocryphal Now," page 22), Republican vice presidential nominee Dick Cheney is on thin ice when he attacks the Clinton administration for shrinking America's Armed Forces, given that he initiated much of that shrinkage as secretary of defense. And he's not exactly on solid ground when he attacks the Clintonites for having "too many commitments" abroad, either. Cheney may disapprove of the Clinton administration's multiple peacekeeping missions, but that didn't stop Halliburton, Cheney's company, from making billions off them. As the Associated Press's Karen Gullo reported last week, Brown & Root Services, a Halliburton subsidiary, received more than $2 billion in federal contracts to provide logistical services to almost every Clinton administration military mission of the past seven years, including troop deployments to Somalia, Haiti, southwest Asia, Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo. Being a rich isolationist, it turns out, is harder than it looks.

CLASS WARFARE: Last week, in an effort to prove that his tax cut is more middle-class-friendly than Al Gore's, George W. Bush trotted before the cameras one Andrew Bechac, a Louisiana teacher and football coach. Bechac, a former GOP activist with a winsome family, was carefully selected as an example of the working stiff who would get a better deal from Bush. "Under my opponent's plan, [Bechac] gets no tax cut," asserted Bush. Doesn't he? The largest chunk of Gore's tax cut is a new voluntary savings account whereby lower- and middle-income families set aside money that the federal government matches. The money in the account could be used for education, a first home, or retirement. But the Bush campaign has made much of the fact that not everybody can afford to put money into these accounts. Which is true enough. The problem is, Bush is also trying to paint Gore's tax cut as a huge budget-buster that will drain the entire surplus. Gore's plan, said Bush, "if fully funded, would cost $1.7 trillion." But Bush gets that number only by assuming that every single eligible family will take advantage of the program. In other words, when he counts the benefits of Gore's plan, Bush assumes nobody will receive it, but when he counts the costs, he assumes everybody will.

FRANK RICH, YOU ARE NOT ALONE: "You know, tonight many Americans will turn on their televisions to see a group of 'Survivors' who have nothing to do with the presidential race. But, during the course of this evening, some viewers may also get an eyeful of campaign ads which will help determine whether Al Gore or George W. Bush is the survivor of Election Day."—Bernard Shaw, CNN's "Inside Politics," August 23

"Have you been following that 'Survivor' TV show? Well ... the Bush tax-cut plan is kind of like a million bucks. You haven't won yet."—Joe Lieberman, Tamarac, Florida, August 23

"Of course, you can hate Al Gore and George W. Bush as much as anyone on 'Survivor.' But you can't hate them as thoroughly, because they talk pap and never bad-mouth each other on camera.... Underneath the bland exterior of a Gore or a Bush lurks a Richard or Susan, but they'll never let you see it."—Rob Morse, *San Francisco Examiner*, August 24

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"Well, I think the makers of 'Survivor' put on a better television show than either the Republicans or the Democrats. They've had a real drama. They put it out, then mounted and promoted it and programmed it for 13 incredible weeks and kept viewers coming back each week. Let's see the Democrats and Republicans do that. I don't think they can."—*New York Post* TV critic Adam Buckman, CNBC's "Hardball," August 24

"If George W. Bush were a 'Survivor' contestant, he would have been Kelly, who made it to the finals with her ability to recall the details of her former teammates' family histories."—Gail Collins, *The New York Times*, August 25

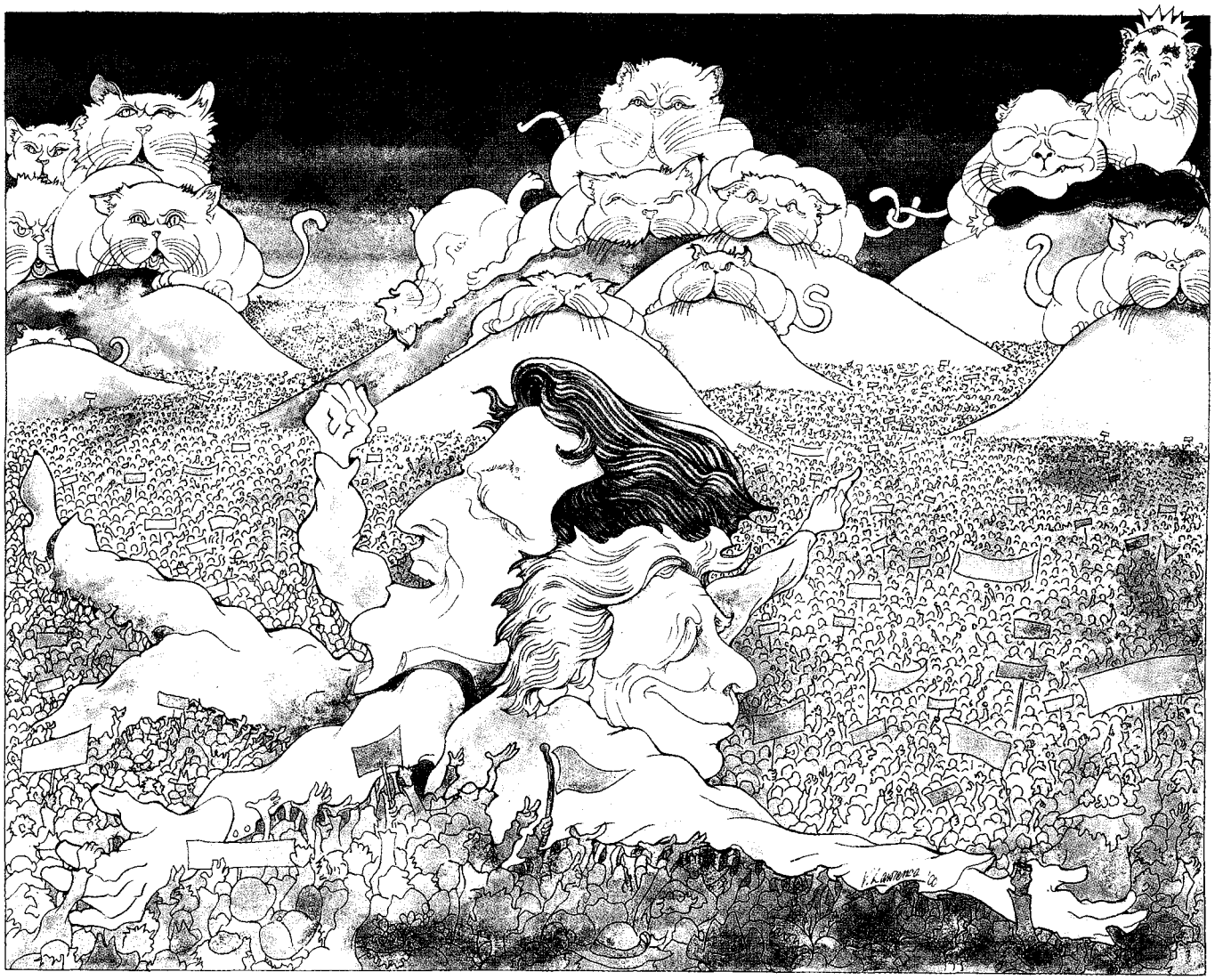
"If 'Survivor' is a microcosm of the United States, I think it's bad news for Governor Bush.... His, his appeal is basically like Kelly's. Kelly, in her final speech, said, 'I'm a good person, you know, I tried to be a good person through this,' just as Bush says he wants to restore dignity and honor to the office. Richard is far more shameless. He says, 'I'm just out there to play the game. I'm out there to win.' Much more like Gore's appeal."—George Stephanopoulos, ABC's "This Week," August 27

PEDICURISTS, BEWARE: "VIGILANTES MISTAKE PEDIATRICIAN FOR PEDOPHILE AND ATTACK HOME"—Associated Press, August 30

DON'T FORGET CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: "I want to kill 'em in suburban areas on gun control and choice."—Democratic National Committee chairman Ed Rendell on his plan to boost Al Gore in Pennsylvania, August 20

TALMUDIC SCHOLAR WATCH CONT'D: "I think he is a very moral man. I think he's very Christian."—Waterbury, Connecticut, mayor and Senate candidate Philip Giordano on Joe Lieberman, his Senate opponent, August 21 ■

VINT'S WEEK



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Moscow Dispatch

New Depths

By Masha Gessen

August is a dangerous month for Russia. It has given the country the coup of 1991, the financial crash of 1998, the start of the second Chechen war in 1999, and this year, on August 12, the *Kursk* submarine disaster. When news of the government's outrageous mishandling of the catastrophe leaked out—the four days before Russia accepted international help, the six days before President Vladimir Putin interrupted his Black Sea vacation, the waves of official misinformation—many observers in Russia and abroad predicted the incident would end Putin's political honeymoon. "The Barents Sea will have a political fallout," read a headline in one major Russian newspaper; "we are all in a sinking sub called Russia," opined another. On nongovernment channels, TV and radio personalities berated the president and his men almost ceaselessly.

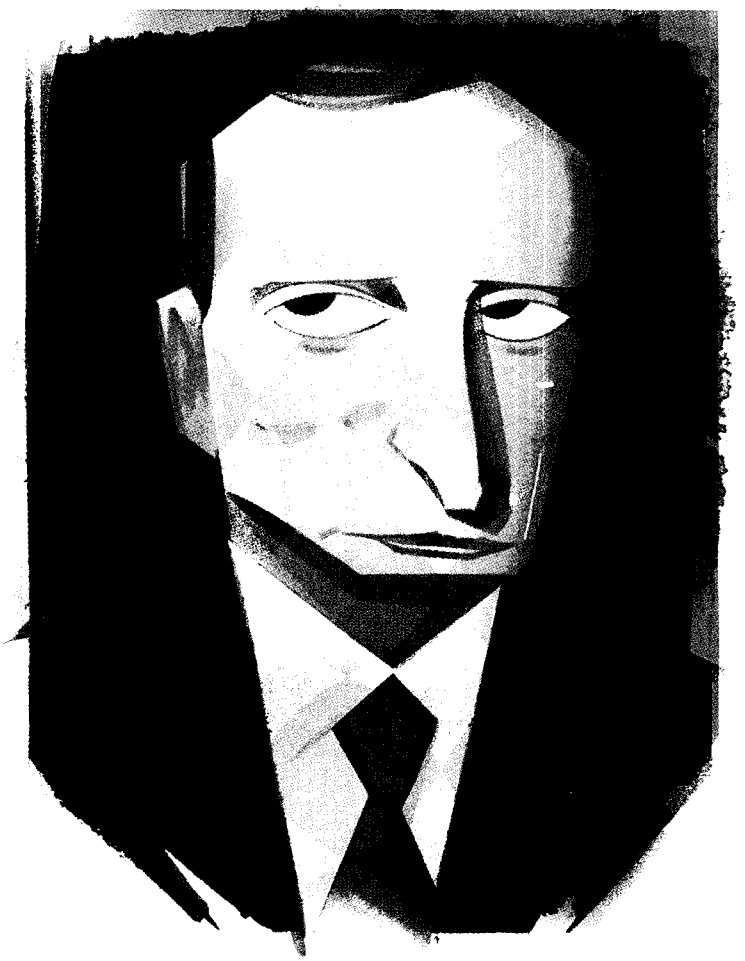
And then something funny happened. A day or two after rescue efforts were abandoned, Russian talk-show callers began to express their support for Putin once again, arguing that he'd done his best with the lousy navy he'd inherited. Russian Orthodox clergy also took to the airwaves, taking the media to task for criticizing Putin so harshly at a painful time.

In fact, it now appears likely that Putin's fumbling of the *Kursk* accident will not damage him politically at all. The iron fist that he has brought to politics, while dismaying to elites and foreigners, still appeals to ordinary Russians. Since taking power, Putin's approval rating has held steady at around 70 percent, unaffected by the endless war in Chechnya, terrorist bombings in the heart of Moscow, or even the liberal economic platform he ostensibly backs. After more than a decade in which centralized political power had been dispersed among a variety of Russian institutions, the public seems to approve of Putin's whirlwind efforts to reverse the trend. Even the widows and mothers of the *Kursk* sailors were, at least in the words of the government minister dispatched to meet with them, "less concerned with money or compensation than with restoring the might of the military and the country."

To some degree, this desire for a strongman is understandable. Under Boris Yeltsin, Russia was a continuing experiment in barely controlled chaos. Its 89 regions, each with its own governor, largely went their own way: many remained in political and economic stasis, while others chased private visions of post-communism. And if Yeltsin enjoyed little leverage over the regional governors, he exercised little more over Russia's two other post-Soviet elites: big business and the political parties represented in the Duma, the parliament's lower chamber.

But, in his yearlong tenure as prime minister and then president, Putin has dramatically curtailed all three alternative power centers. Unable to completely abolish the elected governorships, Putin instead re-carved the nation into seven districts, each with a presidentially appointed governor-general (five of them are, in fact, generals) with broad authority over the region's finances. Putin has further emasculated the governors by pushing through parliament a bill enabling the president to remove elected governors from office for offenses identified by the prosecutor's office—no court decision or local impeachment procedure required. A second bill changes the composition and purpose of the upper house of parliament, which had been made up of elected governors and the speakers of local legislatures. Now it will comprise appointed representatives of the local leaders, and its role in federal lawmaking will become purely symbolic.

With these changes, Putin has deprived one of the country's major political elites of a national pulpit, stripped it of most of its prestige and power, and moved Russia a giant step closer to becoming a unitary state rather than the loose, federal structure it was under Yeltsin. So profound has been the change in the governors' status that the national media has virtually ignored the gubernatorial election campaigns now



ERIC PALMA

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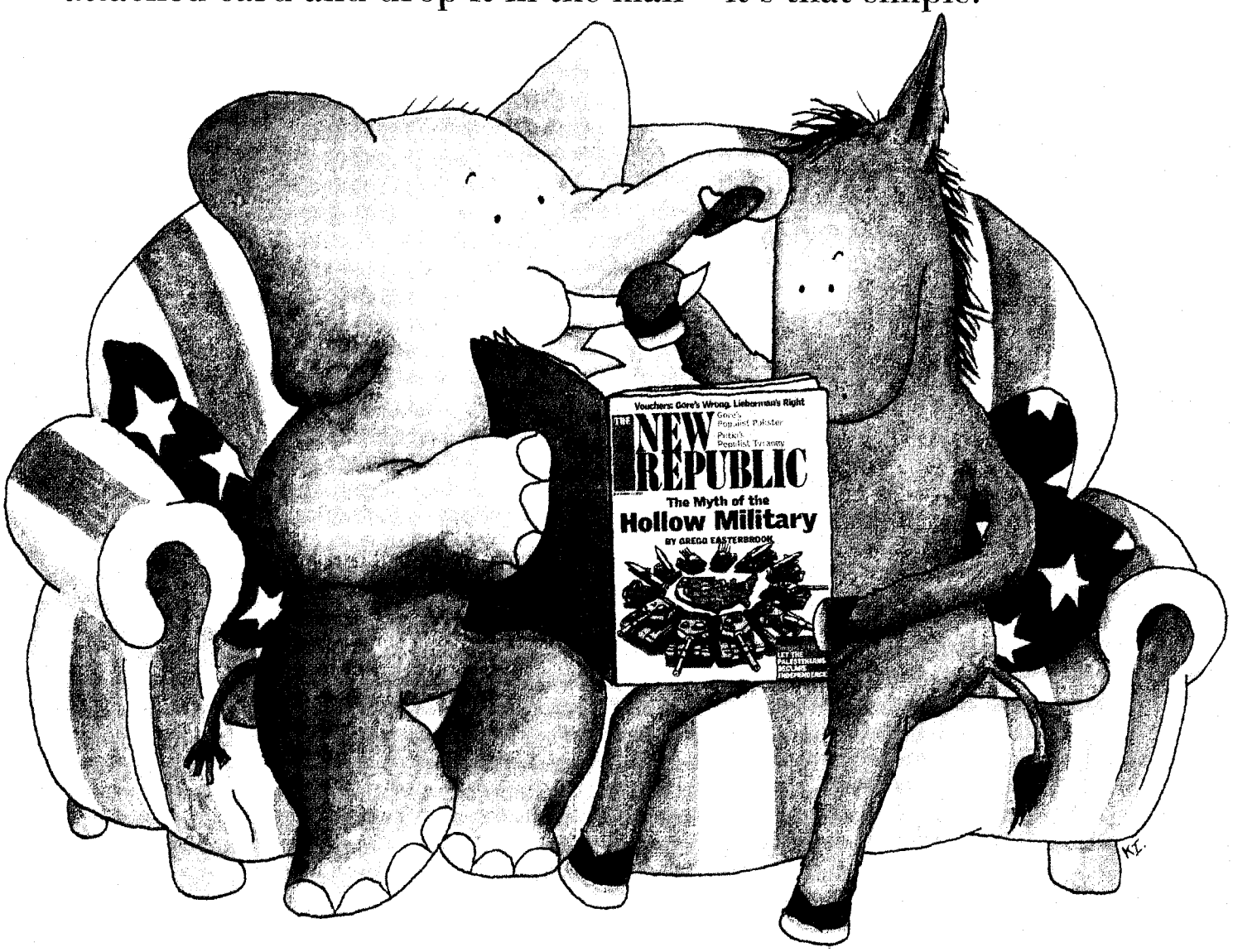

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under way in 40 percent of the regions. They barely matter anymore.

So, too, with the political parties of the Duma. Under Yeltsin, the Duma was a hotbed of anti-Kremlin sentiment, housing everyone from the Communists, who opposed Yeltsin on economic reform, to the extreme right, which opposed him on rapprochement with the United States, to the left-liberal Yabloko, which opposed him on Chechnya. But Putin dealt the multiple-party system a near-mortal blow last fall, when, as prime minister, he engineered the speedy formation of a party called Unity, with no political agenda aside from devotion to the Kremlin. Generous support from the Kremlin combined with a ruthless media campaign secured, for the first time in post-Soviet history, a reliably pro-presidential majority in the Duma. The Kremlin's next step may well be election-reform plans to render parties irrelevant by abolishing party-list seats, which currently account for half of the Duma.

SIMILARLY, PUTIN HAS waged a high-profile battle against any business tycoon he viewed as a competitor. First there was the May raid on the offices of Media-Most, owner of Russia's only independent TV network, and the three-day jailing of its main shareholder, Vladimir Gusinsky. The Kremlin followed that with a slew of tax inspections, criminal investigations, and civil proceedings against other leading businessmen. Within weeks, frightened moguls were lining up for invitations to a meeting with Putin, where, they hoped, new rules of the game would be set forth and their immunity from prosecution secured. The meeting took place at the end of July. Little is known about what transpired, but at a post-meeting press conference the entrepreneurs seemed cowed, offering effusive—if somewhat implausible—praise of the president. (After two participants lauded Putin's openness and his pledge to leave the results of privatization unchallenged, another grumbled into his microphone, "I must have been at a different meeting.")

Meanwhile, two days before the meeting, the government abruptly shelved its case against Gusinsky. Gusinsky immediately flew to Spain, without a word to the media (including his own employees, of whom I am one). Circumstantial evidence suggests he has agreed to forfeit his media holdings, which represent much of Russia's independent press, in exchange for the state's dropping its charges.

By making an example of one important opponent (a tactic frequently employed by the KGB in the 1970s, where the young Vladimir Putin was trained), Putin has profoundly altered the behavior of media tycoons generally. In May, the oil giant LUKoil abruptly pulled back its investments in the television network REN-TV, according to a source within the network, which in turn forced REN-TV to pull out of a contest for a nationwide broadcasting license. Now that media ownership has turned from an asset into a liability, other business leaders are expected to follow suit. And, if persistent leaks are to be believed, the Kremlin intends to make this process irreversible by instituting strict new licensing controls for all media.

And Putin's initiatives against competing elites aren't his only efforts to create what the Kremlin has termed "a strict vertical governing structure" that rules out dissent, disagreement, or discussion within the country's ruling bodies. Domestic agencies intended to protect natural resources and disenfranchised minorities—the environmental protection ministry, the federal forestry service, the ministry on youth politics, and the federal migration service—have been abolished. The closing of the latter two agencies will almost certainly exacerbate the already grave social problems in Russia, which has more than a million refugees and internally displaced persons (about half of whom were displaced by the war in Chechnya) and an estimated one million street children.

As for the environmental agencies, their functions have been handed over to the maniacally pro-business Natural Resources Ministry, which oversees all the mining, drilling, and clear-cutting from which it is now expected to protect the country. One likely consequence will be the construction of a high-speed railway between Moscow and Putin's hometown of St. Petersburg, a plan that had been blocked by the environmental agency because construction would damage a precious wildlife reserve.

Given all these changes, Putin's response to the *Kursk* disaster was not a surprise. He has developed an unmistakable political style characterized by secrecy, misinformation, centralization of power, and ruthless attacks on opponents large and small. That this is the kind of leader Russia has produced, ten years after the Soviet Union's fall, is depressing. That the Russian people seem so happy with him is more depressing still. ■

Cairo Dispatch

Denial

By EMAD MEKAY

LAST WEEK'S PRESIDENTIAL trip to Africa had been developing a theme. In Nigeria, Bill Clinton discussed democracy—Nigeria's fledgling effort. In Tanzania, he discussed democracy—the crippling of Burundi's by ethnic violence. And then he flew here, where he met with Hosni Mubarak and changed the subject. Democracy was out; the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was in.

When it comes to America's relations with Egypt, that's the way it always seems to go: Egypt engages in anti-democratic practices, and the United States looks the other way, particularly if Egypt claims those practices are designed to combat the country's Islamic fundamentalists. In the past year, Mubarak has methodically muzzled his country's voices of dissent through an array of subtle tactics, including onerous new regulations on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), government-directed smear campaigns against

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opposition parties, and attempts to weaken professional organizations. Most flagrantly, in July his government arrested and detained for six weeks the prominent sociologist and government critic Saad Eddin Ibrahim on suspicion of espionage. Too bad for Ibrahim he wasn't arrested in Lagos or Bujumbura. Then he might have made Clinton's talking points.

Mubarak wasn't always like this. When he came to power in 1981, after the assassination of Anwar Sadat, he followed his predecessor's example and nurtured Egypt's civil society. He met regularly with opposition leaders, permitted an increased number of ideologically varied publications, and approved the establishment of numerous democracy- and civil-rights-oriented NGOs. But, in the late '80s, Egypt embarked on a World Bank and International Monetary Fund economic-liberalization program that forced Mubarak's government to cede power to businessmen. And, as Egypt's private sector has grown more powerful—it now generates 70 percent of the county's GDP, compared with 24 percent a decade ago—and, accordingly, demanded more political and economic power, Mubarak has become increasingly paranoid about any other threats to his standing.

Consider the Mubarak regime's recent treatment of the Islamist-oriented Labor Party, Egypt's strongest political opposition. After the Labor Party's journalistic mouthpiece, *Al-Shaab*, ran a series of articles alleging financial misconduct by some of Mubarak's top aides earlier this year, the government press responded with its own stories about how the Labor Party and *Al-Shaab* served Islamic fundamentalists. When two dissident Labor Party members subsequently challenged the party's leadership on the grounds that the party, which was once solidly socialist, had become a vehicle for Islamic fundamentalism, the official press gave the story prominent play—the kind of coverage it seldom affords any opposition figure. The government then froze the party's activities until the dispute is resolved. And in July the Shura Council, parliament's lower house, recommended that state prosecutors ask the Supreme Administrative Court to completely dissolve the Labor Party altogether.

MUBARAK HAS ALSO cracked down on Egypt's civil rights groups. Under a new law enacted in May, all Egyptian NGOs must receive certification from the government's ministry of social affairs. The new law further requires, on national security grounds, that NGOs receive government approval before accepting or using foreign funds. Since the government often denies such approval, a number of prominent Egyptian NGOs, including the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) and the Group of Democratic Development, an election-monitoring outfit, are on the financial equivalent of life support. Indeed, EOHR—which recently slashed its expenditures by 75 percent—has $35,000 in the bank but can't draw on it, since it comes from foreign sources. Other NGOs, like the Legal Research and Resource Center and the Geel Center, two legal-aid groups, have already closed down for lack of funds.

Even professional organizations, traditionally democratic bodies independent of the government, have been targeted. In recent years, the government has barred the Engineers' Syndicate and the Bar Association from electing officers, claiming that both groups are under the influence of Islamists. Mubarak has also undermined the Doctors' Syndicate, which outperformed government authorities in providing relief to victims of the 1992 Cairo earthquake, thus embarrassing the government. The same year, parliament passed a law prohibiting all fund-raising activities by private groups. The Doctors' Syndicate Relief Fund subsequently went bankrupt. In academia, the government recently stripped university faculties of the power to elect deans; deans are now appointed by the central government.

Not surprisingly, the crackdowns have had a chilling effect on dissent, a chill best illustrated by the domestic reaction to Ibrahim's arrest earlier this summer. Although Ibrahim—who has been campaigning for democracy, freedom of expression, minority rights, and fair elections since the mid-'80s—is a popular figure among Egypt's intellectuals and democracy activists, hardly any of them came to his defense. "Everyone was scared," concedes Hisham Kassem, EHOR's chairman. "No one wants anything to do with a case that has a national security nature." Sadly, that seems to go for Bill Clinton, too. ■

Mr. Populism returns.

Play It Again, Stan

By JONATHAN COHN

ONE OF THE great fictions perpetuated by modern political campaigns is that advisers don't really advise their candidates. And no one perpetuates it more than the Gore campaign. Stung by months of negative stories on the campaign's ever-shifting staff and message, the Gore team now reflexively downplays the role of its campaign strategists. Ask Chris Lehane, Doug Hattaway, or some other Gore spokesperson about what this or that adviser is doing, and you're likely to be scolded, "The candidate is the story, not his strategists." To hear them tell it, Bob Shrum, Bill Daley, and Carter Eskew do little more than lick envelopes, shuffle papers, and make the occasional Diet Coke run.

But in the case of Stanley Greenberg, who officially signed on with Al Gore in early August, the skittishness is easier to understand. It's not just that Greenberg is a pollster, whose prominence would therefore bolster the charge that Al Gore doesn't know his own mind. Greenberg is also the pollster associated with the early Clinton years, when the president was widely seen as too liberal. And at Greenberg is frequently blamed for the 1994 health care fiasco, for

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which he ultimately lost his job.

Yet, communications-office spin notwithstanding, Greenberg's presence on the campaign team at this moment is hardly incidental. Last month, in a cover story co-authored for *The American Prospect*, Greenberg outlined a strategy for post-Clinton Democrats: Establish credibility with disenchanted swing voters by affirming family values, then embrace populist programs that put government to work for middle- and low-income Americans. "A family-centered progressive discourse on values," Greenberg wrote, "would free voters to respond to Democrats on the social and economic issues on which Democrats now have a presumptive advantage." Sound familiar? It's an argument Greenberg has been making for more than a decade. And, for the past month or so, Gore has been making it, too.

That doesn't mean Greenberg is Gore's Rasputin. But it does mean Greenberg has helped shape Gore's message. And that's no cause for shame. While many journalists and conservative Democrats see Greenberg's populism as unreconstructed liberalism, it actually represents something very different: a middle ground between the Walter Mondale-style liberalism that dominated the party in the 1980s and the John Breaux- (or Joe Lieberman-) style centrism that has been taking over the party in the last few years. Where the former focused largely on the plight of the poor and the latter has targeted suburban professionals, Greenberg insists that the economically vulnerable working class must form the backbone of any Democratic majority. If the Greenberg philosophy is indeed a throwback, it is a throwback to the New Democrat ideal of 1992, when Clinton first ran for president. It makes just as much sense today as it did then, and it helps explain why Gore has surged ahead in the polls.

GREENBERG FIRST ENTERED the national spotlight in the mid-'80s, with his groundbreaking research in Macomb County, Michigan, a blue-collar suburb of Detroit. For decades, the residents of Macomb County, many of them union members, had reliably voted Democratic. But by the '80s something had changed: Macomb went overwhelmingly for Ronald Reagan. The Michigan Democratic Party and the United Auto Workers asked Greenberg to find out what had happened.

Through numerous focus groups, Greenberg disentangled the sources of Macomb voters' disaffection with the Democratic Party and decided that its liberal stances on welfare, affirmative action, and crime were to blame. "The Democratic Party, in their eyes, once represented working people but no longer," wrote Greenberg. "It worries about blacks and minorities and supports a government that mainly blocks opportunities for people like themselves." Although Democrats still had plenty of good ideas for helping middle-class voters economically, Greenberg concluded that they'd never get the chance to implement them until they regained these voters' trust. And to do that they had to shed their reputation for cultural permissiveness and reaffirm their belief in the middle-class work ethic.

Today, this is conventional wisdom. But when Greenberg first proposed it in the mid-'80s, it was anything but. Civil rights, feminist, and labor activists charged that Greenberg's work amounted to a highbrow validation of working-class racism. So frightened of Greenberg's findings was the Democratic Party leadership that, in 1984, it suppressed an internal Democratic National Committee follow-up to the Macomb research that concluded that Democratic appeals to "fairness" were alienating middle-class voters, who interpreted the term as a code word for welfare.

But, as Democratic defeats mounted, Greenberg's work became harder to ignore. And one of the politicians who took notice was Bill Clinton. As a Southern governor who'd once lost reelection by getting to the left of his constituents, he had firsthand knowledge of his party's problems with moderate voters. So in 1992 Clinton gave Greenberg the chance to test his theory in an actual campaign. With Greenberg as his polling strategist, Clinton signaled his mainstream values by promising tougher laws against crime, time limits for welfare recipients, and a commitment to "mend" affirmative action. At the same time, he promised government assistance to the working class in the form of targeted tax breaks, job training, and a broad health insurance initiative.

Even at the time, the Greenberg strategy—laden with language about inequality and built around expensive government programs—was more populist than the Democratic Leadership Council and many other New Democrats would have liked. But, for Greenberg and Clinton, the idea was not merely to limit government spending; it was to build a case for *more* aggressive federal interventions by adopting a conservative stance on values and demonstrating that government could be efficient as well as compassionate. And the strategy seemed to work brilliantly. Clinton didn't quite carry Macomb County, but he won back many other disaffected Democrats in middle-class districts, enough to win the presidency. As of Election Day 1992, the popular appetite for government activism seemed stronger than it had been in years: according to the polls, the public was strongly behind Clinton's signature promise, universal health care.

AS A REWARD for his work, Greenberg got the plum job of White House pollster and a lucrative contract with the Democratic Party—not to mention a featured role in the 1993 documentary *The War Room*. But then things went downhill. For many conservative New Democrats, the administration's early moves—snubbing DLC officials in staff appointments, prioritizing health care over welfare reform—validated their initial squeamishness about Clinton's campaign-trail populism. And they blamed, in part, consultants like Greenberg.

Eventually Clinton himself shifted to the right. The president held Greenberg personally responsible for the health care fiasco—the pollster, Clinton said, had overestimated the public's tolerance for sweeping reform. The president brought in a new polling strategist: Dick Morris, a man with no interest whatsoever in reaffirming activist government. With great dismay, Greenberg watched as Clinton, at Morris's behest, adopted ever more conservative positions on the budget—in effect, undermining the original Clintonian pro-

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ject by dismantling the very government apparatus Greenberg had hoped to rebuild.

So in 1995, as disenchanted with the president as the president was with him, Greenberg began a voluntary exile from Democratic presidential politics, taking his "project" to a list of foreign clients that reads like a who's who of center-left world leaders: Tony Blair, Gerhard Schröder, Ehud Barak. To the extent that he kept a finger in domestic politics, it was mostly as an intellectual gadfly: together with Harvard sociologist Theda Skocpol, he ran a seminar series for labor-liberal intellectuals called the New Majority Project. In *The American Prospect*, Greenberg sparred with Clinton's newest pollster, Mark Penn, over the emerging administration consensus that it made more sense for the Democrats to target upscale middle-class voters rather than Greenberg's signature working-class constituencies.

That consensus basically held until last month, when Greenberg was hired by Gore. When Gore first trotted out his new populism at the Democratic convention in August, the punditocracy reacted negatively. "Gore ceded the political center," Morton Kondracke opined, "and with it, probably, the election." But Greenberg thought otherwise, and Gore apparently agrees. In the last few weeks, the Gore campaign has turned into a test of Greenberg's grand agenda: a test of whether the Democrats are sufficiently inoculated on "values" issues that they can boldly expand government protection for the working class and the poor.

There is some evidence Greenberg is right. Today, the Democrats hold an edge with voters on almost every major issue, from health care to Social Security to the environment to education. Meanwhile, the Republicans' ability to counter these strengths with issues that function as a proxy for race—crime, welfare, even affirmative action—has diminished. So much so, in fact, that George W. Bush seems to have concluded that the best way to win back the presidency is to emulate the Democrats' minority overtures rather than subliminally attack them. As Greenberg puts it, "Most of the races that I've thrown myself into ... they all had to address the problem of a Democratic Party, or a center-left party, that was weighed down by its past. What's exciting about Al Gore and this election is that it's a very different situation."

Indeed, the real question may be not whether Greenberg's strategy makes sense but how committed to it Gore really is. Just a week after Gore's convention speech, running mate Joe Lieberman reassured pharmaceutical companies and other businesses unnerved by the vice president's populist attacks that the language in the speech had some "rhetorical flourishes." And, in one background leak to the press that contradicted the vice president's own statements, a Gore strategist suggested that the populist language is just a targeted appeal to the Democratic base—distinct from the campaign's message to independent swing voters, to which Gore will soon return.

For Greenberg, it must seem like déjà vu. A victim of the Clinton administration's drift right, he has been given an unexpected second chance, only to hear the same criticisms well up once again. Greenberg clearly thinks Gore's populism is more than a fad—that it reflects the vice president's deep commitment to resurrecting the vision of activist government that brought Greenberg to Macomb County more than a decade ago. He had better hope so. Because one good barometer of Gore's commitment to populism is how long Stan Greenberg stays in his job. ■

DAVID COWLES

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Let Arafat declare his state. Go Ahead

By Douglas J. Feith

Imagine that Yasir Arafat does the dread deed and unilaterally declares Palestine's independence on September 13. Israeli and American officials say it would be a catastrophe. Why? Not because the Palestinians would have their own state. Such a state may lead to disaster, but Israeli and U.S. officials assumed that risk in 1993, when the Oslo process began. No, the catastrophe would be that the declaration was unilateral, rather than part of a peace agreement in which Arafat formally proclaimed the Palestinian-Israeli conflict over.

But why is such an agreement so important? For seven years now, Israel has again and again transferred land and authority to the Palestinians and has received in return Arafat's promises to make peace, disarm terrorist groups, renounce threats of violence, cease anti-Israel propaganda, and the like. And again and again the Palestinian Authority chairman has violated those promises. To believe that Arafat would fulfill his next promise—the promise of a "final settlement"—is an ideological exercise grounded in neither history nor reason.

In fact, it misconstrues not only the Palestinians' understanding of Oslo but also Israel's. The Israeli leaders who launched and sustained Oslo understood that peace would be, at best, a by-product of the negotiations. For them, Oslo's paramount purpose was "ending the occupation"—allowing Israel to relinquish control of the populated areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They hoped for peace, but they didn't require it. They wanted out, whether or not the Palestine Liberation Organization transformed itself into a neighborly government that upheld its commitments. Israeli officials had political reasons for calling their policy of unilateral withdrawal a "peace process," but maintaining that fiction has been costly, and now, after the failure at Camp David, its abandonment would be a sensible stride into a post-Oslo world.

Yitzhak Rabin, prime minister when the Oslo process began, didn't start out as a unilateralist, though he and his Labor Party had long favored relinquishing parts of the territories. Permanent control over millions of West Bank and Gaza Arabs, Rabin argued, would threaten Israel's status as a democratic and Jewish state. But Rabin said he would yield that control only to a responsible, non-terrorist Arab leader who would first assure Israel of peace and security in return. Labor for years imagined that leader would be King Hussein of Jordan, but by the late '80s the king had formally renounced that role. Rabin then fixed his hopes on the non-PLO Palestinian leadership participating in the so-called Madrid-process talks, which began after the 1991 Gulf war. Under no circumstances, Rabin vowed repeatedly during his 1992 election campaign, would Israel deal with a terrorist organization committed to Israel's destruction, like the PLO.

For many Israelis, weary of intifada violence and decades of Arab hostility and war, Rabin's idea that Israel could unburden itself of the territories and get paid for doing so—in the form of a lasting peace agreement with non-PLO interlocutors—was irresistible: the national security equivalent of a free lunch. The model for such a land-for-peace deal was Israel's agreement with Egypt. In November 1977, Anwar Sadat had flown to the Knesset and announced an end to war between the two countries. The parties then negotiated for more than a year and signed their treaty in March 1979. Israeli withdrawals from the Sinai desert began only then—after the Arab side had publicly, formally, comprehensively, and credibly agreed to peace.

But, contrary to Rabin's predictions, the Palestinian Madrid-process negotiators were unwilling to play the Sadat role. After Rabin's election, a year passed in unproductive talks. Exasperated and embarrassed, Rabin feared that a diplomatic deadlock would hand Likud the next election and risk Israel's permanent entrenchment in the West Bank and Gaza.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the Israeli chiefly responsible for what were then still-secret and only semiofficial talks with the PLO in Oslo, filled the policy vacuum. In the summer of 1993, he persuaded Rabin to initiate Israeli withdrawals without any Palestinian renunciation of the conflict and to transfer the land to the PLO, which Rabin still viewed as a terrorist organization. Rabin and Peres's land-*before*-peace policy regarding Arafat inverted the sequence of the Egyptian-Israeli diplomacy. Indeed, Israel's whole point was to withdraw whether the Palestinians offered peace or not.

In late August 1993, Rabin agreed to the first Oslo accord, known as the Declaration of Principles (DOP). Israel promised to withdraw from Gaza and the West Bank city of Jericho and to transfer specified "powers and responsibilities" to the Palestinians. The Palestinian side undertook to establish a governing authority, hold elections, create a police force, enact laws, and organize various official boards and banks and administrations. Absent from the DOP were any provisions requiring the Palestinians to halt the violence or end the conflict. That is, the DOP addressed land but not peace.

Nevertheless, Israeli leaders understood that they could command more domestic support if their concessions to the PLO were seen not simply as unilateral withdrawals but as necessary steps in a mutual peacemaking process. And, when they finally received the peace promises they sought from the PLO—in side letters to the accord sealed on September 13, 1993, with that famous Rabin-Arafat handshake on the White House South Lawn—Israeli officials adjusted their story. They stopped saying DOP withdrawals would occur without regard to Palestinian peace promises and began claiming instead that Israel's concessions hinged on peace.

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They warned that if the Palestinian Authority failed to suppress terrorism, limit its arms, transfer terror suspects to Israel for prosecution, amend the PLO Covenant, and generally perform its obligations, Israel would not only stop the process but reverse it. Rabin thus wrapped his radical new policy in the rhetoric of a familiar old one, dressing up Oslo to look like land-for-peace.

BUT ARAFAT GRASPED from the start that Israel would not actually condition its withdrawals on his keeping his word. Accordingly, the Palestinian Authority has systematically violated the Oslo accords. It maintains security forces larger and more heavily equipped than permitted, and it refuses to use those forces to fulfill the PA's obligations to disarm terrorist groups and hand over suspects to Israel. In fact, the PA has not honored even one of the numerous Israeli requests for such transfers. Nor has the PA fulfilled its most basic commitment: to promote peace by refraining from anti-Israel propaganda. In schoolbooks, official maps, TV broadcasts, summer camps for teenage boys, and speech after speech by its top leaders, the PA delegitimates Israel, preaches hostility, praises anti-Israel violence, and otherwise reaffirms the "armed struggle." Arafat continually invokes the 1974 PLO strategy of dismantling Israel in stages. On several occasions, the PA has organized mass violence against Israel, and PA forces have twice fired their Israel-provided weapons at Israeli soldiers, in September 1996 and again this May.

In response, Israel sometimes threatens to call off the process. But, true to the logic of unilateralism, those threats time and again prove empty. Indeed, Israeli officials have generally played down the violations lest they undermine domestic support for Oslo and disappoint the many Israelis who have invested great hopes in the peace process. On occasion, Israeli officials have even actively defended the PA from pressure—for instance, lobbying to stop pro-Israel members of Congress from tying U.S. aid to PA compliance.

Nor did Benjamin Netanyahu—Rabin and Peres's Likud successor, who made Oslo's lack of reciprocity a centerpiece of his 1996 campaign for prime minister—insist on transforming Oslo from a process of unilateral Israeli withdrawals into an authentically reciprocal arrangement. He talked frequently about PA violations and delayed Israeli withdrawals in protest, but he remained unwilling to prick the Oslo bubble—to insist, once and for all, on PA compliance. He made additional agreements (Hebron and Wye) and implemented withdrawals thereunder, despite a long list of unremedied PA violations. He could not bring himself to admit to his public that Oslo's promise of peace was mere window dressing and that Israel's only realistic ambition in the process was to redraw the lines behind which it would continue to defend itself against unregenerate antagonists.

Seven years ago, Rabin embraced Oslo to give himself freedom of action. But instead Oslo has put the Israeli government on an accelerating treadmill, requiring it to run faster and faster, making bigger and bigger concessions to the Palestinians, to preserve the appearance of cooperation with Arafat and to prevent a return to open conflict, which would be more dangerous now because the PA has 40,000-plus men under arms. Israelis once regarded peace with Arafat and the PLO with almost universal skepticism. But leaders like Rabin and Ehud Barak, former chiefs of staff reputed to be smart and tough-minded, have done much to neutralize that skepticism. In doing so, they outsmarted themselves. To win public support for withdrawals, they asserted for years that Oslo would produce peace. They used their personal credibility to persuade much of the public not only that Arafat would end the conflict but that Israel "has no alternative to peace." Thus, Israeli officials put themselves in a box, with Arafat holding the key.

At Camp David last month, Arafat showed how costly a "final settlement" agreement would be. It is hard to overstate how extraordinary the concessions Barak offered were. According to the most credible reports, they included approximately 90 percent of the West Bank, recognition of a new sovereign Palestinian state therein, the absorption into Israel of 100,000 Palestinian refugees, the abandonment of various Jewish settlements, and, most astonishingly, the division of Jerusalem, with the Palestinians to have sovereignty over the Arab neighborhoods outside the Old City walls and more limited "control" over Muslim and Christian sections of the Old City—including the Temple Mount.

Yet Arafat refused the offer. Among his chief reasons was Israel's refusal to acknowledge a Palestinian "right of return"—that is, an Israeli duty to receive millions of Palestinians within the pre-1967 boundaries. Even leaders of Israel's peace camp voice amazement at the turn of events. After Camp David's failure, eminent Israeli novelist Amos Oz wrote in *The New York Times* that the Palestinians "insist on their 'right of return,' when we all very well know that around here 'right of return' is an Arab euphemism for the liquidation of Israel." The self-described "peace activist" says it is unclear, even at this late date in the peace process, whether the Palestinians want peace or want to "massacre [the Israelis] and throw them in the ocean."

Barak insists that the concessions Israel offered at Camp David are now null and void. But peace-process logic does not allow for such nullification. Before the meeting, it was conventional wisdom, even among many of Israel's opponents, that under no circumstances would the Jewish state compromise its exclusive sovereignty over an undivided Jerusalem. This idea—which had become a powerful national asset—has now been negated. New Israeli-Palestinian talks will begin where Barak left off last month.

THE REFUSAL OF Israeli leaders to label Oslo accurately as a process of unilateral Israeli withdrawal does not mean there are no arguments for such a policy. The lack of civil and political rights for West Bank and Gaza Arabs was a distressing moral dilemma. Ruling that large Arab population drew on Israel's financial and military resources and divided the country politically. Now that it has delivered into the PA's hands towns and villages containing nearly 100 percent of those Arabs, maybe Israel, though smaller, will be happier—less isolated in the world, with better morale and with a Jewish voting majority safe from drastic dilution.

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Unilateral withdrawal, however, also has its drawbacks: it may endanger Israel militarily and force the country into a hair-trigger defense posture. An independent, revanchist "ministate" in the territories could destabilize Jordan as well as Israel; harbor terrorists; ally with rogue states such as Iran, Syria, and Iraq; and import hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees to camps threateningly positioned on the border with Israel. Also, unilateral withdrawal (especially in light of Israel's retreat from Lebanon) looks like running away, which may embolden Israel's enemies, undermining deterrence and making war more likely.

But Israel has never hashed out these arguments, because for seven years its leaders have refused to acknowledge that unilateral withdrawal has been national policy. And, now that Israel has already quit so much territory, the debate would be academic.

But appreciating Oslo's unilateralism helps clarify the decisions U.S. and Israeli officials now face. Would the United States and Israel be better served by assuaging Arafat to get his signature on a "final settlement" agreement with Israel—or not? All things being equal, it would be better if the Palestinian side renounced the conflict with Israel formally and promised to keep the peace—better still if the PA were to keep that promise. But all things are not equal, for Arafat is demanding a lot for his consent to a "final settlement." So the real choice before Israel and the United States is this: Should they pay the PA—with East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley, the "right of return," and billions of dollars of aid—to declare independence within the framework of yet another agreement that, history tells us, the Palestinians won't fulfill and Israel won't enforce?

Alternatively, Israel could set its borders on its own, making any additional withdrawals openly and honestly unilateral. Israelis would know that the conflict continues, but Oslo's core notion—that Israel can itself end the conflict through reasonable concessions—would be usefully discredited. Arafat would declare an independent state, and, as Israel has already given the Palestinians the key elements of statehood (population, land, self-government), it couldn't stop him. But neither Israel nor the United States would be required to recognize such a state or give it aid.

The Palestinians might someday produce a leadership willing to make peace in good faith. Until then, Israel would have to warn the new state that it will retaliate against acts—or threats—of violence. But Israel does this already, and it would have to continue to do so even if it bought Arafat's signature on a "final settlement."

To acknowledge that Oslo has failed in its declared purpose—and that its essence has from the beginning been Israeli withdrawal, not bilateral peace—is to invite charges that one opposes peace. Which is why political leaders tend not to say it. Peace, as any decent person knows, is valuable and worth paying for. But illusions of peace, like those Oslo has promoted among Israelis and Americans for the last seven years, are not valuable at all. In fact, they're worth paying to avoid. ■

The myth of the hollow military.

Apocryphal Now

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

THE PRESIDENT OF the United States stood in downtown Kiev, cheered by thousands waving American flags. Throughout the seas he had traversed, vast American supercarrier battle groups roamed the waves at will, while U.S. submarines patrolled the depths and an unseen network of acoustic listening posts tracked the world's few remaining unfriendly vessels. In the skies through which the president had traveled, American fighters, bombers, and jammers enjoyed uncontested supremacy. On land, U.S. troops camped in no fewer than 70 nations. In space, an unparalleled satellite network silently watched potential adversaries, vigilant for any exhaust plume or coded transmission that might signal trouble. Back home, thousands of tanks, jets, and helicopters sat in reserve.

While the president visited Kiev, American personnel examined Site 49 near Severomorsk, once one of Russia's most closely guarded secrets—the home of its navy's nuclear stockpile. America's vanquished foes in Moscow had asked the victors to go there to improve security. In return, the United States allowed Russian officers into its installations. But the Russians came mainly as peddlers offering leftover war hardware. With no chance of actually opposing the U.S. military, they figured they might as well become its supplier.

This is no Tom Clancy fantasy; it describes the conditions surrounding Bill Clinton's visit to Ukraine two and a half months ago. The American military is, at this moment, more powerful relative to its foes than any armed force in history—stronger than the Roman legions at the peak of the empire, stronger than Britannia when the sun never set on the Royal Navy, stronger than the Wehrmacht on the day it entered Paris. To be sure, problems exist. The booming economy makes recruitment and retention difficult. Weapons procurement is simultaneously wasteful and underfunded. Clinton's weak standing with the officer corps has prevented him from even attempting the comprehensive Pentagon reorga-

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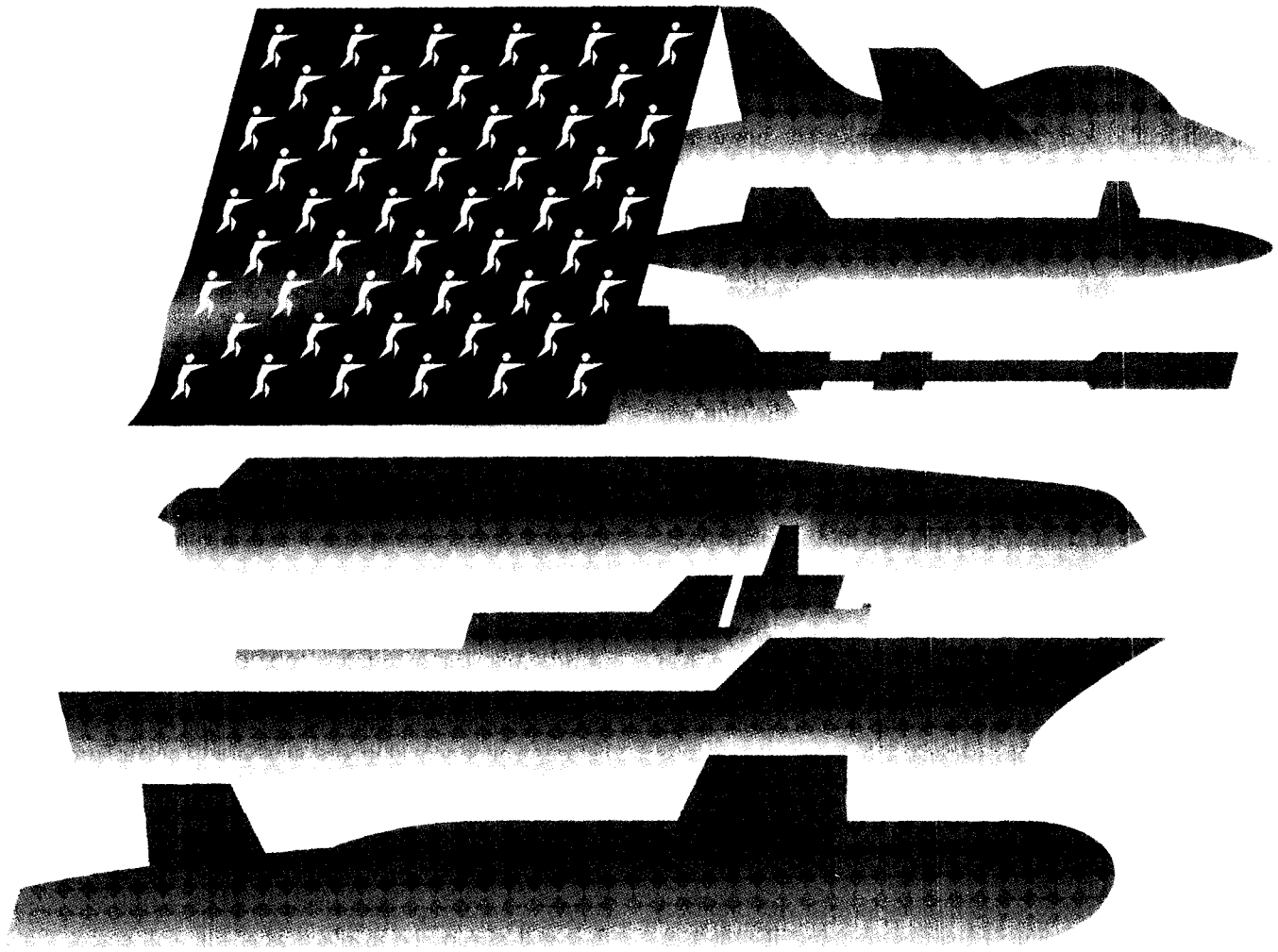

LLOYD MILLER

nization the post-cold-war world requires. But the underlying reality remains: The United States of the year 2000 is the greatest military power in the history of the world.

And yet, in this year's presidential campaign, the American Armed Forces are widely described as crumbling. George W. Bush, in a much-publicized speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars last month, bemoaned a "military in decline." At the Republican National Convention, Gulf war hero Norman Schwarzkopf derided the Pentagon as enfeebled. The Armed Services are in a "downward spiral" (Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott), "neglected" (Senator John McCain), in "bad" shape (Representative Curt Weldon), and "could not fight and win against Iraq today" (Representative Duncan Hunter). Bush advisers routinely describe the American military as a "hollow force."

So where does this hollowness reside? *In nuclear arms*, Russia has about the same number of warheads as the United States, but many are unusable. Russia's sea-launched warheads, its most valuable kind, are effectively decommissioned because Moscow's strategic submarine fleet is in such poor repair that it rarely ventures far from port. (And when it does, well, think *Kursk*.) By contrast, several of America's *Ohio*-class strategic submarines are at sea at any given moment, and each bears enough force to incinerate every major target in Russia and China. Versus America's thousands of missile-borne warheads, ready to launch on a few minutes' notice, China possesses 18 antiquated single-warhead ICBMs that require hours or days of launch preparation, plus a single nuclear-missile submarine that almost never departs its dock slip. America may not have a reliable missile defense, something no country has ever had; but, if any country ever does, the United States will be the first. Overall, America's strategic deterrent is today stronger relative to the rest of the world than it has been at any point since the United States' brief atomic monopoly in the late '40s.

In air power, America today possesses more jet bombers, more advanced fighter planes and tactical aircraft, and more aerial tankers, which allow fighters and bombers to operate far from their home soil, than all the other nations of the world combined. In the post-World War II era, American aircraft have flown with near impunity throughout the world. Since the early Vietnam war years, U.S.-built aircraft have decisively won every air battle in which they have participated.

On the seas, the U.S. Navy boasts more than twice as many principal combat ships as Russia and China combined, plus a dozen supercarrier battle groups, compared with zero for the rest of the world. Included in the supercarrier contingent are eight astonishingly large and sophisticated *Nimitz*-class floating cities, crewed by nearly 6,000 people and

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capable of launching more aircraft per minute than Chicago's O'Hare Airport; a ninth, the *Ronald Reagan*, is being readied for christening. (Russia possesses the world's only non-American heavy carrier, the *Admiral Kuznetsov*, but the ship is in such poor condition that it is widely viewed as a fish reef looking for a place to sink.) The power and quality of U.S. *Burke*-class destroyers and the new *Virginia*-class attack submarines are similarly unmatched. The United States rules the blue water without opposition. In fact, it possesses the only fleet in the world designed for anything broader than shore defense and regional action.

On the ground, the U.S. Army not only rolls the world's best armor (including nearly 8,000 of the fearfully effective Abrams tanks, more than the combined number of modern tanks possessed by Russia and China), but, as the Gulf war showed, it has the world's best-trained troops. China has more soldiers, but the bulk of them are poorly educated forced conscripts, while America boasts the best-educated large military ever. Ninety-nine percent of American troops are high school graduates, almost all officers have finished college, and a master's degree or higher is essential for promotion at the top. The education and training shows. Iraq actually brought to the Gulf war a larger ground force than the United States, yet the army was so thoroughly routed that it sometimes appeared that the Iraqis weren't even firing their weapons. Often they weren't: Abrams tanks possess such effective long-range cannon and fire control that in most clashes they destroyed Iraq's best Russian-built armor while the enemy tanks were a full mile too far away to begin shooting back.

In amphibious forces, other nations have service branches called "marines," but none possesses anything like the U.S. Marines—whole divisions backed by helicopter carriers, "swimming" armor, and "jump jets," capable of going ashore anywhere in the world. The United States is the only nation that even maintains a standing heavy amphibious force.

In money, American military spending is three times China's and Russia's combined. America spends more on defense than the next twelve highest-spending nations put together. Even adjusting for the fact that American soldiers are well-paid while many of the world's are not, the money edge is huge: 63 percent of world military spending comes from the United States and its close allies. Much of that money pays for an extraordinary logistical infrastructure. During World War II, supplies expended per U.S. soldier in the field worked out to 60 pounds per day, including fuel and water; by the Gulf war, the figure was up to 400 pounds, all delivered to the right place at the right time without snafus. In the six-month buildup to the Gulf war, the United States moved more tonnage over a greater distance than in the two-year buildup to Normandy.

In technology, U.S. "smart" weapons increasingly hit their targets *exactly*—within a "circular error probable" of as little as a meter. Individual U.S. soldiers can receive space-relayed battlefield updates, while U.S. electronic jamming and "spoofing" devices have grown so effective that they cause false squadrons of aircraft to appear on enemy screens while keeping the real ones undetected. The United States has three classes of stealth aircraft already in operation, with three more close to production; no other nation, even in the affluent West, even has one on the drawing board. Abrams tanks not only fire accurately over long distances but do so *while moving*; a computerized stabilizer system compensates for terrain, bumps, and wind. (By contrast, most of the world's tanks must clank to a vulnerable halt to discharge an accurate shot.) And that's just what the United States has today. Under development are lasers for shooting down tactical missiles, fighters that sustain supersonic speed for hours (instead of minutes, as the best planes do today), mobile artillery that fires at an unheard-of rate, remote-control fighter-bombers so much smaller than piloted planes that they are invisible until within lethal range, electromagnetic rays that fry the circuitry of whatever they hit, and even precision-guided weapons that fall from orbit without it being necessary for an American aircraft to enter another country's airspace.

In concept, America is the world's sole military whose primary mission is not defense. Practically the entire U.S. military is an expeditionary force, designed not to guard borders—a duty that ties down most units of other militaries, including China's—but to "project power" elsewhere in the world. America maintains 100,000 soldiers in Europe, 100,000 in the western Pacific, and bases and fuel depots across the globe, all aimed at stomping out problems long before an opponent glimpses our shores. The Air Force trains pilots to fly from the interior of the United States half a world away and back. (The B-2 bombers that participated in the Serbia campaign operated from Missouri, flying more than 10,000 miles round-trip for each strike.) The Marines keep supply ships "pre-positioned" in ports across the seas so that they will already be in place when the call comes. Since World War II, America has fought, and almost always prevailed, in a dozen places thousands of miles from home, while only one other nation (Britain, in the Falklands) has even attempted distant combat. And America's adversaries have stumbled in conflicts on their own borders (the Soviet Union, in Afghanistan; Iraq, in the Gulf war and against Iran; China, in Korea). Even before the Soviet Union fell, America's military power was far ahead of the rest of the world's. And this relative strength has not declined in the past decade; it has steadily risen.

THE DEVOTEES OF the "hollow military" school do not deny that America's Armed Services have a glittering postwar record, but they argue that, during the Clinton years, the forces have suffered serious erosion. The claim contains grains of truth but greatly underestimates the continuing magnitude of U.S. strength.

It's true that personnel resources are strained in places. Army and Marine staffing is fine, but the Navy is struggling with its personnel requirements—long tours at sea, on vessels where the funds go into weaponry rather than creature comforts, have limited appeal in a prosperous economy. The booming civilian airline business is hiring every pilot it can find, leaving the Air Force roughly 1,000 fliers short. Retention rates for experienced personnel have fallen in many categories.

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But the military is already addressing such problems—it increased salaries in each of the last two defense-budget cycles. Candidate Bush cites pay as one of the Clinton military's core problems, and it is true that most members of today's Armed Forces earn less than their civilian counterparts. But for soldiers to be paid less than civilians is hardly new. Comparisons by Cindy Williams, a former Congressional Budget Office official, put the gap between comparable wage raises in the civilian and military sectors at about 13 percent under Clinton, only slightly higher than the 11.5 percent that prevailed under Presidents Reagan and Bush. During his presidential campaign, McCain said things were so bad that vast numbers of U.S. service members depended on food stamps. Actually, less than one in 200 military families receive food stamps, a lower proportion than among the population as a whole. And, for those that do, it's usually because of a quirk by which military personnel who receive an off-base housing allowance don't declare that as income, making them appear in worse financial shape than they truly are.

Readiness has indeed fallen in the last few years from its postwar high under President Bush. But as Michael O'Hanlon, a defense analyst at the Brookings Institution, has shown, the "mission capable" rate for aircraft, tanks, and other key systems now runs from 70 to 80 percent, about the same as during the Reagan presidency. Since 1998, when the Joint Chiefs began expressing concerns, the Pentagon readiness budget has increased significantly—and will likely rise further, since Clinton's fiscal 2001 defense request proposes to add another $4.4 billion.

Some note with alarm that defense spending has declined almost 40 percent in real-dollar terms from its 1986 cold war peak, mirroring the 40 percent drop in active-duty personnel. But no one, including at the Pentagon, believes spending needed to stay at the '80s level: the American military has always ebbed in the years after a win, and the cold war was emphatically a win. As part of the contraction, the Army has decreased from 18 divisions to 10, while Navy and Air Force units have declined by around one-third. Republican vice presidential candidate Dick Cheney says this shows the Defense Department is atrophying. But the reduction in divisions, combatant ships, and fighter wings follows basically the contraction strategy laid out by Cheney himself when he was secretary of defense, in a 1990 document called the Base Force review.

FOR ALL THEIR fiery rhetoric, Republicans and Democrats today don't fundamentally disagree about defense spending, as they did, say, during the Carter and Reagan years. Since Clinton took office, his defense-budget proposals have never differed from Republican counterproposals by more than 2 percent. For fiscal 2001, for example, Clinton proposed an increase of about 4 percent; congressional Republicans replied by proposing an increase of slightly less than 6 percent of the Pentagon budget. On the campaign trail, George W. Bush has suggested increasing military spending by somewhat more than $5 billion per year—incremental, considering the current $310 billion in total defense-spending authority—while Al Gore says he favors as much as a $12 billion annual increase.

Many of the military's current problems stem not from hollowing out but from bloating. And many of the very congressmen who complain about military decline are to blame. For instance, for years the Pentagon has requested permission to close additional redundant bases and has been denied; last spring the Senate voted to postpone further base-closure decisions until at least 2003. Congressional patrons also insist on expensive programs the Pentagon doesn't want. The V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft—three of whose first 15 models have crashed—has been recommended for cancellation by the Pentagon three times, yet it remains in production. The V-22 stays alive largely because of Representative Curt Weldon, in whose district it is built. When he's not pressuring the White House to divert funds to this patronage boondoggle, Weldon demands to know why there isn't more money available for missile defense.

THE BLOAT ISN'T confined to big-ticket items. Fully two-thirds of the Pentagon budget goes to personnel, operations, and maintenance, and most observers think nowhere near enough has been done to make routine procurement market-efficient. Only recently, for example, did Pentagon quartermasters win the authority to buy minor office supplies without filing formal purchase orders. And most basic provisions used by U.S. forces overseas are still shipped from the United States rather than purchased "on the economy." Retired Lieutenant General Thomas McInerney, president of Business Executives for National Security, calculates that if the Pentagon did more of its nonmilitary purchasing in standard commercial ways, "outsourced" all work that does not require military personnel, and closed unneeded bases, it could save $30 billion annually—effectively increasing the money available for real defense by 10 percent.

Weapons-buying also needs reform. Despite numerous efforts to bring market principles to big-ticket acquisitions—including the Packard Commission under Reagan and a similar project conducted by Defense Secretary William Cohen—most weapons systems still "take far too long to build and cost far too much," in the words of the General Accounting Office. "ARCHAIC BUYING BREEDS EXORBITANT ARMS PRICES" was the cheerful headline of a recent *Aviation Week and Space Technology* article about Pentagon weapons projects—and *Aviation Week* is a Pentagon booster!

The V-22 aircraft, for example, cost $80 million each—double the price of the much larger civilian Boeing 737. The F-22 Raptor, the Air Force's latest fighter, costs a breathtaking $200 million, more than treble the price of the F-15 Eagle, which it will replace. Retired Air Force Colonel Everest Riccioni, a former fighter pilot and fighter-plane designer, has called the cost of the F-22 "obscene." Bombers too have grown ridiculously expensive, with a single B-2 costing $2.2 billion. Prices are so high that the Air Force now plans to delay any new bomber purchases until 2037, at which point the last of the service's B-52s will be as old as the World War I vintage biplanes now on display at the Smithsonian.

One reason prices are so high is the sluggish pace at which

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weapons systems are built. The average development cycle for a weapons program is now eleven years—twice the time it took Boeing to develop the technologically complex 777, and so long that the typical project usually spans the tenure of two or three presidents, several secretaries of defense, numerous sets of Joint Chiefs, and half a dozen program managers. Such long production cycles mean tremendous time and energy wasted on wheel-spinning and covering old ground.

Take the F-22. Prototypes were airborne, and flying impressively, in 1991. So did the aircraft go into production? No, it suffered through a full decade of "engineering development," Pentagonese for periods in which the main action is lobbying and budget increases. In the case of the F-22, "engineering development" served mainly to increase the plane's cost and weight: no important features or design elements were changed. According to the current timetable, the F-22 will not actually enter service until 2005, which will be 14 years after the first models left the runway—the B-24 Liberator, workhorse of the Air Corps in World War II, went from prototype to thousands in global combat to all units mothballed in half that time. There's no doubt the F-22 will be the best fighter ever, but glacial development has rendered the plane so overpriced that even the world's richest country may not be able to afford it—the planned buy has steadily declined, from 648 originally to 341 today.

Retired Air Force Colonel John Warden, chief planner for the Gulf air war, believes counterintuitively that the solution to cost overruns is lots of small projects. "When you've got a program designed to last for decades and buy hundreds of airplanes, this gives contractors a tremendous stake in running up the price," Warden says. "Everyone in the [Pentagon] becomes incredibly conservative, because they don't want to be blamed for killing a huge program. There are endless review boards and extra bureaucracy, while the designers realize this may be the only airplane they field in their entire careers, so they gold plate it with everything." Warden notes that the F-117 stealth fighter was conceived in 1978 and operational by 1983, at a cost that, converted to current dollars, equals nearly one-third of the F-22 price. "The reason the F-117 was built cheaply and quickly is that it was a small-batch program of about 50 planes; no one's career would have been ruined or no contractor bankrupted if the thing failed," Warden says. "The F-22 program is too big to fail, and that leads to bloat."

WARDEN THINKS THAT if the military fielded small numbers of new fighters every few years rather than one mega-project per decade, as it currently does, total costs would fall, and the planes themselves would improve, because each successive generation could express the latest twists in technology. Given that the F-22's basic concept was developed in 1986, by the time the plane finally goes out to the flight line, this "new" fighter will be based on technological assumptions that are 20 years old. "If you were designing the F-22 today, there's no way it would look the way it does—we know so much more about electronics and stealth aerodynamics now," Warden says. Already, the Air Force has allocated a multimillion-dollar fund to stockpile parts for the F-22, because, though the plane is not yet operational, many of its components are becoming obsolete.

Overpricing is especially important because in the next few years the military needs to buy a lot of new weapons. The '90s, defense analysts say, were a "procurement holiday," because the Reagan buildup supplied so many tanks, ships, and airplanes that Bush and Clinton didn't need to fund many. If the U.S. military is to remain unchallenged, that holiday must end. The Army needs more battlefield rockets, a new advanced rapid-fire howitzer, and new light armor for the rapid-reaction divisions it is assembling for Kosovo-style missions. The Navy's *Virginia*-class submarines will ensure years of U.S. mastery of the oceans, but only if they're funded and hit with champagne bottles. The Navy has also contemplated a type of new vessel, an "arsenal ship" designed to launch cruise missiles by the hundreds, making future Serbia-scale operations more decisive while lowering the risk to pilots and civilians. (No one is saying so, but an arsenal ship might also be ideal for a future U.S. defense of Israel.) The two Clinton terms included only one major aircraft-acquisition program. Now five are "spooling up" simultaneously—the F-22, the V-22, a new version of the F-18 carrier-based fighter, the Army's Comanche combat helicopter, and the Joint Strike Fighter, a stealth plane especially needed by the Marines, whose air wings are growing obsolete.

The new fighters alone could run $350 billion, or more than a year's total Pentagon spending. Throw in some funding for an anti-missile system, and you can see why the Joint Chiefs think the defense budget needs to rise by as much as $30 billion annually. Defense Secretary Cohen has said the next generation of weapons is "going to cost more money, and we ought to face up to it." But ending the procurement holiday does not necessarily require a larger budget. McInerney estimates the military could save all the money it needs for new weapons by reforming its purchasing. Those who claim the military needs to be more expensive to keep from being hollow are missing the point. What the Armed Forces need is to be as smart in their purchasing as they are in battle.

CRUCIAL TO THAT effort is for the military finally to adapt to the post-cold-war world. The Pentagon has been refreshingly forthright about the passing of "the threat," as the Soviet Union was known to the services: there's no cold war nostalgia among generals and admirals. But, though the Pentagon has let go of the cold war as a mission, it clings with incredible determination to the organizational hierarchy that mission dictated—in particular, a force structure designed for a heavy armored confrontation in Central Europe coupled with an all-out naval assault on Russian home territory through the Norwegian Sea. Since the Berlin Wall fell, no fewer than seven national commissions or major Pentagon internal panels have recommended extensive changes in military organization and combat structure. (George W. says that, if elected, he'd institute an eighth.) Yet each has gone unheeded.

Why, for example, does the post-cold-war Navy need a

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dozen carrier battle groups when today's world offers no other powerful navy to fight? Why does the Air Force refuse to give up its "roles and missions" budget control over close air support (the planes that aid troops in battle) when it shows no enthusiasm for this job? (The Air Force prefers "deep strike" missions behind enemy lines.) Why has the Army continued to emphasize heavy armor designed to destroy other armor when fast deployment of light forces is what it is increasingly asked to do? Why do the Marines have their own private air division, except for fear that the other services won't come to their aid? Perhaps most fundamentally, why does the Pentagon cling to its "two war" planning structure—the idea that America must always be ready to fight two pitched conflicts simultaneously? In coming decades, the two-war scenario seems much less likely than "half a war, three peacekeeping missions, and one annoying low-intensity we-don't-know-what-to-call-it." Which would require a different allocation of resources.

Pentagon reform is stymied by interservice rivalry. The Army insists on its own close air support units, because Army leadership does not trust the Air Force to send planes to support troops at the center of a battle. That insistence both wastes money and potentially costs lives, since what the Army has for this purpose is the Apache anti-tank helicopter, the one U.S. weapon that didn't work in the Serbia campaign. A cold-war-era Pentagon agreement says that while the Air Force, Marines, and Navy can have planes *and* helicopters, the Army can have only helicopters. This forces the Army to field the woeful Apache, because, according to the Pentagon's outmoded organizational chart, the Army's alternative is nothing.

FOLLOWING THE INTERSERVICE follies of the 1983 Grenada operation—during which an Army squad pinned down on the island famously had to call the United States on an AT&T calling card at a pay phone to convey a "send help" message to Navy ships offshore—Congress passed Goldwater-Nichols, a bill that officially "unified" the services. The legislation helped, making it possible to have a single-theater commander, Schwarzkopf, during the Gulf war. Most significantly, Schwarzkopf employed his Goldwater-Nichols authority to bar the Marines from staging an amphibious landing at Kuwait City. Schwarzkopf felt it would be a needless risk, and he turned out to be right. Marine leadership had been eager for the landing, and, before Goldwater-Nichols, Schwarzkopf would not have been able to stop it, because even four-star Army commanders could not issue orders to officers in Marine uniform, or vice versa. But, while Goldwater-Nichols allowed for temporary "joint task forces" to execute specific campaigns, larger, structural interservice disputes were left standing. When the Gulf war withdrawal began, the unified command disbanded.

And so turf fights continue to impede post-cold-war restructuring. In a cogent new book, *Lifting the Fog of War*, retired Admiral Bill Owens notes that because individual services propose weapons projects, each tends to build its own empire rather than address military needs generally. Thus the Navy keeps proposing more money for carrier battle groups while putting the more cost-effective arsenal ship on the back burner, because it could make carriers seem outdated, imperiling the Navy's budget share. The flyboys lobby hard for the F-22—a max-tech aircraft designed for the deep-strike missions that are the Air Force's glory—and give lip service to the Joint Strike Fighter, a less glamorous plane whose purpose would be close support of Army and Marine grunts. Owens thinks the Joint Chiefs, not individual services, should propose new weapons systems, which would put greater emphasis on overall requirements and less on budget jockeying. Owens also favors true unification of the services, eliminating their separation on any matters more serious than the Army-Navy football game.

WHAT MIGHT A revamped post-cold-war American military look like? Owens believes the Armed Forces could safely continue to reduce overall personnel, as the Army begins to realize the kind of technology-based productivity improvements that have already come to the Navy and Air Force. Role-and-mission traditions could be scrambled if a unified Joint Chiefs adopted a "whatever works" approach to conflicted issues like close air support. As the cost of technology falls, smart bombs, which even today constitute only a small share of U.S. munitions—just 9 percent of the bombs used in the Gulf war were precision-guided—might entirely replace "dumb" bombs, rendering U.S. bombardment more fearsome to adversaries, less dangerous to innocents, and cheaper. (The new JDAM smart bomb costs about one-tenth as much as the bombs it replaces.) Flocks of relatively small, remote-piloted "unmanned combat air vehicles" might dominate future operations, while remote-operated minitanks assail enemy armor without risk to a single American soldier's life.

Perhaps cumbersome procurement rules might even be loosened so that new-economy technology entrepreneurs, and not just the aerospace old boys' network, could contribute ideas to national defense. "Consolidation has made the existing [aerospace] firms too large and not agile," Warden, the retired colonel, says. "If we brought true U.S. private initiative to defense, we'd be thinking up clever new technological ideas much faster than adversaries could devise countermeasures." Real defense reform of the kind Warden suggests could make the U.S. Armed Forces even stronger, while generating budget cuts that offset the expense of new weapons. If the Pentagon does one day "hollow out," it is less likely to be because America's leaders haven't given the military sufficient money than because they haven't given military affairs sufficient thought.

The British military writer James Adams, who's being read around the Pentagon these days, recently wrote, "Peacekeeping and warfare today are taking place in a world the likes of which we have never seen." Actually, we have seen it—when Rome was the only superpower, and it spent three centuries imposing order and, mainly, enforcing peace. For a time, all nations combined could not have defeated Rome in the field. Whatever it may portend for world security, today America is more powerful than Rome was during the Pax. How strange that so many American politicians won't admit it. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

So Near and Yet....

ABBIE HOFFMAN DIED in 1989, and here—so soon or at last—is a film about him. So soon *and* at last; **Steal This Movie** (Lions Gate) seems both recent and remote. Thus it may astonish both younger and older viewers. This duality persists in other ways. Those of us who were around at the time may remember Hoffman, as I do, with mixed admiration and skepticism. As a leader of political protest, he did much that needed doing, but, right from the start, he seemed not untouched by adolescent romance about revolution. He was both fiery and clownish (another duality). He once said that, to be effective, the revolutionary had to choose between comedy and martyrdom. But Hoffman never completely gave up one for the other.

The film's title derives from *Steal This Book*, which Hoffman published in 1971. The screenplay by Bruce Graham begins in the 1970s when Hoffman, in hiding from the authorities on drug charges, contacts a journalist he trusts, urging him to write the truth about his alleged persecution (Hoffman's reaction to this harassment always seemed naïve. When dissidents strenuously attack a government with public displays and harassments, how do they expect the government to respond?) The journalist visits Mrs. Hoffman and others who know the fugitive, and these interviews evoke brilliant fusillades of flashbacks. Then the story moves ahead to Hoffman's emergence from the disguise under which he has been living and working for years; then on to the inish. A final card tells us that his death was reported as suicide.

The first flashbacks take us to Berkeley in 1967, where Hoffman, in suit and shirt and tie and haircut, is distributing leaflets to students and urging them to protest the Vietnam War. (We are not told that he had two university degrees in psychology and had been active in civil rights movements.) We follow him through his public and personal lives. In the first strand are his organizing of the Youth International Party (Yippies), his staging of rallies, his establishment of Free Stores, his harassment by the FBI and the CIA (terms that are here used almost interchangeably), his part in the giant anti-war protests at the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, his ructions at the trial that followed, his hiding as "Barry Freed," in which persona he worked for conservancy. His private life involved his marriage with Anita, the arrival of their son, his entanglement with Johanna Lawrenson, and the (virtual) *ménage à trois* that followed.

When he emerged from underground and turned himself in, he was found guilty on drug charges and served a year in prison, and the film implies that the drug charges were to Hoffman what the income tax charges were to Al Capone, simply the means by which he could be nabbed. After Abbie's trial he speaks, to a crowd and to the camera, proud of what he and his friends accomplished. (His claims are a bit hyperbolic; did the Yippies really "end apartheid" in this country?) His last line has a touch of Brecht's ending for several plays. "It's your turn now," he tells us.

The will to public action is certainly not dead in this country: witness last year's WTO protests in Seattle and the protests at the recent political conventions. Nonetheless, the giant wave of young people's disgust and anger, of insulted patriotism, that flooded this country in the '60s and early '70s—a wave so huge that it must have had a part in Lyndon Johnson's decision not to run again in 1968—seems very far from a country that is, in great part, so happily drunk on hedonism. The obvious catalyst back then was Vietnam, a horrendous war that, as Hoffman often said, had been distortedly presented by the government from the start. (Ten years afterward, Senator J. William Fulbright said that "the biggest lesson I learned from Vietnam is not to trust government statements.") We surely should not long for such another catalyst, but public responses to current issues make the heat of this film seem distant.

Yet again there is a duality: so many of us were so involved in the "Hoffman" issues, pro or con, that it's hard to think of this film as history.

Suffusing all the above, vitalizing the issues, is the quality of the picture itself. The writer Graham, the director, Robert Greenwald, and the editor, Kimberly Ray, have made sure that this film did not become a neat biopic. *Steal This Movie*, in its moment-by-moment texture, has the iconoclastic energy of its protagonist. It bursts with vivid flashbacks and visual interjections, with impatience and slyness, operating through visual chords rather than a homophonic narrative. (Mader's music, beginning with a wry version of the national anthem under the credits, sustains this texture.) What the filmmakers wanted was a picture that interwove planes of time and action into an entity that supervened sheer chronicle, that put the facts in fitting temporal-emotional-contextual form. Oliver Stone was clearly a model for them, and they have profited by it.

Janeane Garofalo, as Anita, has the role that she has long deserved: multi-faceted, with as much wit as angst, with gentle femininity that never approaches mush. Jeanne Tripplehorn is bountifully attractive as Johanna, but the role is less fully written than that of Anita. Vincent D'Onofrio, who plays Hoffman, first drew notice as the Marine who kills his sergeant and himself in *Full Metal Jacket*. Here he has the role of his career, so far, and he triumphs. (He is much bigger than Hoffman was, but what of it? Peter O'Toole is bigger than T.E. Lawrence was.) Every crinkle and mood, every mockery, every gentleness, every anger, every climactic roar (and he has quite a few) is realized by D'Onofrio so wholly that he almost transmutes the film from fiction into documentary. Bravo, D'Onofrio.

Aimée and Jaguar (Zeitgeist), a German film, is a quite different true story told fictionally. Based on a book by Erica Fischer, the screenplay by Max Färberböck and Rona Munro recounts a love affair between two women, one of whom was a Jew, in Berlin during World War II. The Jewish woman eventually perished somewhere in the camps. The other woman is, at this moment, still living in Berlin.

Lilly Wust is a comfortably middle-class woman with four small children whose husband is in the army in Russia and who is entertaining herself with another army officer. She has no apparent interest in lesbianism. Felice Schragheim, secretly a Jew, is a newspaper editor's secretary and, also secretly, a passionate lesbian, a member of a circle of similar women. Felice happens to meet Lilly and falls passionately in love; eventually she contrives opportunities to be with Lilly and to seduce her. The grim ending is foreseeable.

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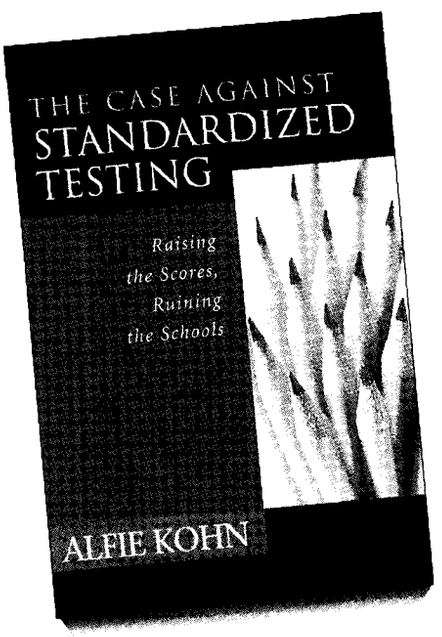

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All the film is delicately, humanely acted; the seduction sequence itself is outstanding. This sequence implies, of course, that lesbian response was dormant in Lilly, and that Felice aroused it; and the scene in which this is done, with Lilly first angered and then frightened, with Felice insisting on the truth of what they were doing, is exceptionally moving. Juliane Köhler, as Lilly, and Maria Schrader, as Felice, are actresses of depth and clarity. (Felice gives the other woman the nickname Aimée and dubs herself Jaguar—I thought of the lovers' nicknames in Act One of *Der Rosenkavalier*.) A bow also to Johanna Wokalek, as Ilse, who had been Felice's lover, abandoned after Felice meets Lilly. The co-writer Färbenböck has directed with no hint of the sensational, only with the verity of the people in mind, and he is helped by Tony Imi's sensuous cinematography.

But one factor keeps interposing itself between us and the drama. It is hard to share totally in the anguish of civilian lovers, homo or hetero, when we remember what else was going on at the time. Obviously human longings do not disappear in wartime; still, this love story takes place in a city that is continually being pounded by bombs, in a country where millions of programmed atrocities are in process. Aimée and Jaguar suffered in and because of their love, but it becomes shattering only if we are able to disregard all the rest. ■

Rogini's Law

By AVISHAI MARGALIT

Development as Freedom by Amartya Sen

(Alfred A. Knopf, 366 pp., $27.50)

COMMUNISM GAVE "real freedom" a bad name; and "real equality," and "real democracy". In the name of "real freedom," the dictatorship of the proletariat and the people's democracies abolished the merely "formal" freedoms of bourgeois democracy. In the name of "real equality," they treated equality before the law as a procedural nuisance. In the aftermath of communism, not surprisingly, the word "real," when it is attached to political virtues, is forever suspect.

But "real" is indeed a funny word, which enables one to conjure up all sorts of tricks. The communists' trick was to use "real" in what the philosopher J. L. Austin called the excluding use. Thus, a "real duck" is no more of a duck than any ordinary duck; but the phrase excludes phony ducks such as a toy duck, a picture duck, or a stuffed duck—that is, all non-ducks that retain some semblance to real ducks. "Real democracy" in the communist use was similarly designed to exclude parliamentary democracy as a phony democracy, which is a non-democracy. And the same exclusionary trick was played with freedom.

Amartya Sen has written a noble book on freedom—on real freedom, and its relation to economic development. Sen does much to rehabilitate the idea of real freedom from its debased history. He uses "real" not in the excluding sense, but in the approving, intensifying sense—in the sense in which "real help" means very much help, a very good example of help. From his experience in India, Sen knows all too well the importance of parliamentary democracy, and in no way does he regard it as phony, as non-democracy. He does not believe that politics is everything, but neither does he reduce or explain politics out of existence.

But important as parliamentary democracy may be, it is not enough: not in India, not in other places. Sen's objective in his book is to add to freedom, not to subtract from it. The book's title is not catchy, but it is precise. In Sen's original and important account, economic development is broadly conceived as contributing to real freedom. This is a very different perspective on development from the orthodox one, which measures development only, or predominantly, in terms of the gross national product (GNP), or in other strictly economic terms. Sen seeks to demonstrate, to the contrary, that growth in the freedom to choose is itself a proper and necessary measure of development; that political development is an essential part of economic development. "Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency," Sen writes. "The removal of substantial unfreedoms, it is argued here, is *constitutive* of development."

IF AUSTIN WAS troubled by "real," Aristotle was troubled by adjectives such as "healthy." (Actually, both thinkers were troubled by both terms.) What does it mean to say that wholewheat bread is healthy? Babies can be healthy, but not slices of bread. "Healthy," in Aristotle's view, has a primary sense, when it is applied, say, to babies; but it can also be used in a derived sense, when it is used in such notions as healthy exercises, healthy food, and healthy air. The latter contribute to what is healthy in the primary sense. Similarly, it would be banal to say that "medicine" in its primary sense means the science and the art of restoring people to health and maintaining people's health, whereas "medicine" as a term for the substance, the medication that is used for treating disease, is a secondary sense. To regard medicine only in terms of its substances, and to forget what those substances are for, is a form of fetishism. (Some doctors, like some patients, are fetishists.)

Sen believes that there is a great deal of fetishism in the discussion of economic goods. What must matter in our analysis, he insists, is the purpose of those goods, the larger good to which the goods are supposed to contribute. He is not exercised by Marx's notion of fetishism, according to which relations between people appear as relations between objects. He worries, rather, about the fetishistic interest of economists in goods rather than in their contribution to the proper functioning of human agents. This is not a mere semantic shift from the secondary sense to the primary sense of the value of goods. It is a genuine shift in perspective, and it has wide implications for the way in which we should view development and justice.

Sen contrasts his standpoint with two influential standpoints on the foundation of justice. He does this by way of an instructive parable: Annapurna wants someone to clear up his garden. Three unemployed laborers are desperate for the job, but there is only enough work for one laborer. Dinu is the poorest of the three workers who have presented themselves for the job. Shouldn't Annapurna

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hire him? But Bishanno has also applied for the job, and he has recently been impoverished, and is devastated. He is not as poor as Dinu, but he is certainly the unhappiest of the three. Shouldn't Annapurna offer the job to him? But here is Rogini, and she has a terrible chronic disease, and the money that she will earn from this work can help to treat it. She has a happy disposition and she is less poor than Dinu and Bishanno, but she is certainly the most constrained in her movements, and the money would make the biggest difference in her life. Shouldn't *she* get the job?

The income-egalitarian perspective would focus on who is the poorest, and so it would give Dinu the most serious consideration. The classical utilitarian perspective would focus on the unhappiest, on Bishanno, as deserving of the job. But Sen's perspective is neither income-egalitarian nor utilitarian. It is what he calls a "capabilities perspective." It focuses on the crippled Rogini, and on the issue of her quality of life, of the improvement in her ability to use her powers in a less constrained way. For Rogini, the money "would make the biggest difference to the quality of life and freedom from illness," and so the capabilities perspective would award her the job.

Sen introduces into the philosophical discussion not only new arguments, but also new sensibilities. Even in his little parable one can detect his natural respect for the most elemental social reality, which is not at all like the reality of professional philosophers or of those who are likely to read Sen's book. He begins his philosophical argument with a situation that vividly illustrates what existence is like for most of humanity. In Sen's world, there is a pride of place, and an analytical implication, to the nutritious value of rice, which he prefers to the satisfaction of expensive tastes, such as a taste for plower's eggs (Ronald Dworkin's famous example).

I do not mean to suggest that Sen's work amounts to a revival of Victorian sentimentality. There are certainly enough statistics, hard facts, and tough analysis in his book to stop bleeding hearts from bleeding. Still, it is extraordinary, and quite wonderful, to read a work of political philosophy that so honors the harsh truths of poverty and famine, of bare human existence in all its brutality. This is a global book not least because it encompasses those who are left behind by globalization.

Consider Sen's haunting discussion of "the missing women." Granting a voice to silent groups is an important element of what is called the politics of difference; and for Sen, to whom freedom may be defined as the enabling conditions of human capabilities, granting a voice in public life is a way of enhancing freedom. Voice, too, is a capability. But Sen attempts to give a voice not only to those who are absent from public life, but also to those who are absent from life itself: "the missing women." It is a terrifying description, and it describes a terrifying reality.

In societies that care equally for men and women, as is the case in North America and Europe, the ratio of women to men in the population is 105 to 100. (Women are "hardier" by nature than men; but this is another story.) In the Third World, however, we find ratios such as 95 women to 100 men in Egypt, 94 to 100 in Bangladesh and China, 93 to 100 in India, 90 to 100 in Pakistan. The missing women are those who would have been alive had equal care been extended to them as to the men in their societies. The overall numbers that result from this quantitative measure of injustice are staggering: in Sen's estimate, about 100 million women are missing in the developing world.

Sen is a staunch critic of the doctrine according to which we rank states of affairs only by the extent to which they satisfy our desires, or by the degree in which they make us happy. "Welfarism" is what he calls such a doctrine. For the satisfaction of our desires is only one of the things that goods can do for us. Moreover, it is not always an admirable thing. Some people's desires are fine, but other people's desires are nasty, and they find satisfaction in the misery of others. To be neutral toward such desires can on occasions be obscene. Sen is quick to remind us that Nero got quite a kick out of the burning of Rome.

A better way to evaluate goods, in Sen's view, is by what they enable us to do. In what ways do they nourish us? Do they make us mobile, and able to participate in public life? Do they enhance our self-respect? Sen's term for what goods make us do, and what goods let us be, is "functionings." His term "capability," the central term of his argument, designates a set of various functionings that are available to an individual. To be better off, in Sen's account, is to be provided with more options for one's capabilities, because this entails more freedom. A heroin-chic model may consume no more calories than a starving Bangladeshi, but she is much better off for having the option to eat like a sumo wrestler. What development should seek to achieve is not just an increase in our pleasurable states of mind—in a word, happiness—but an enhancement of our capabilities. And so it is with social justice. What should be equalized in a just society is the range of human functioning.

SOVEREIGN VIRTUE

The Theory and Practice of Equality

RONALD DWORKIN

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On the face of it, Sen's notion of development in terms of developing capabilities stands on strong objective grounds. It addresses real needs, and not the subjective satisfaction of desires. Needs, such as nutrition, can be measured in calories: an objective measure. But the need for nutrition—Sen's paradigmatic example of need—is a rather misleading example. After all, what people need depends also on their subjective goals. For an athlete to be mobile is an essential need, but not for a computer bum. Given the set of all combinations of functioning, it is not clear who by Sen's account is more capable than whom. It all depends on what they want to achieve in life.

Sen evaluates institutions in terms of their contribution to our capabilities, to our real freedom. Indeed, our prospects in life are crucially dependent on institutions. Institutions may hinder or promote our freedom, and it is in such terms that they should be judged. One major institution that should certainly be viewed from the perspective of freedom, the real freedom of capabilities, is the market. There is no trace of mindless romantic leftism in Sen's evaluation of the market; he is firmly grounded in the relatively forgotten tradition of Smith, Ricardo, and Marx, who were very appreciative of the role of the market in countering vested interests and feudal and semi-feudal privileges. Sen's defense of the market is not that it is an efficient instrument for bringing about the "Pareto-optimum"—that is, a state of affairs in which no one can improve his or her satisfaction without diminishing the satisfaction of someone else. He defends the market, instead, for its intrinsic value as manifesting the freedom to buy and sell.

Yet Sen is no idolater of the market. His book includes also a powerful reminder of the failures of the market in providing important public goods such as health and education. He reminds us that the prophets of the market such as Adam Smith trumpeted the responsible selfishness of the butcher, the baker, and the brewer to promote goods through the market, but at the same time feared that very high rates of interest would attract the reckless "prodigal" and the "projector" of bubble companies and tulip markets. Hence Smith advocated, against market fanatics such as Bentham, a strong interventionist policy to put a ceiling on the rate of interest.

The important point is not whether Smith was right in believing that a high interest rate sends the wrong signal to the market. The important point is that, given such a belief, he did not hesitate in suggesting interventions in the market. Sen, too, believes that developing countries need strong public initiatives and public interventions in education, health care, land reform, and so on. In recent years, there has been a tendency to forget the historical role that such political action has played in creating the rich countries of today.

ON THE QUESTION of democracy, Sen stands admirably firm against a position that many developing countries find so seductive. It is that the fulfillment of basic economic needs of poor populations necessarily involves the denial or the deferral of political freedoms, rather in the way that such freedoms are suspended in a state of war. The effect of such a view is to make democracy into a luxury of the rich: the poor just cannot afford it, attractive as it is. (But then the poor cannot afford all sorts of attractive things.) Many of those who advance this false and heartless position are very good at breaking liberty's eggs, but very bad in preparing omelettes to feed the poor. The authoritarian regime in Singapore, of course, can do both.

So what is the merit of the food-first, liberty-later position? (It is usually encountered as the food-first, liberty-much-later position.) Sen finds it flawed on all counts. It is based, he says, on a fundamental misunderstanding of the complicated connections between political freedoms and the fulfillment of economic needs.

In Sen's account of development as freedom, the democratic system is a constitutive element of development. Democracy is a good in itself, an essential element of human freedom, and so it does not require justification (though it often requires defense). Yet democracy, in Sen's account, is not only intrinsically valuable, it is also instrumentally valuable. As a tool for bringing about economic development in the more narrow sense, democracy is a vital instrument. This is one of Sen's most forceful claims. Indeed, democracy is the best political tool among the available ones for creating the values and the norms that are required for running an efficient economy. Liberty must not wait on food; more, liberty is a condition of food, and more generally of economic development.

Sen's argument for the instrumental value of democracy for development would seem to be challenged by the case of China. The exceedingly non-democratic People's Republic of China appears to cope better with feeding a huge and growing population than does democratic India. Indeed, China did better than India for a long period of time in raising life expectancy, which is one of the most important indicators on Sen's list of functions that constitute capabilities. Might not it be said, then, that China enhanced "real" freedom in spite of its lack of democracy? Moreover, China's brutal one-child family policy seems to control population growth better than any Indian policy.

The apparent success of China in comparison to India in winning the race against Malthus—so that the supply of food continues to outpace the population—would appear to lend support to the idea that democratic freedom is a toy of the rich hungry for fun and not a tool of the poor hungry for food. When the poor hear the word "freedom," they should rush to their rice.

OR SHOULD THEY? Sen counters this pernicious conclusion with some very pertinent history. He points out that the worst famine in recorded history took place in China between 1958 and 1961, after the catastrophic flop of the Great Leap Forward. More than thirty million people perished in that famine. In India, by contrast, there has been no famine during the half-century and more since India established a democratic regime, which is to say, a government that would be held accountable, and punished politically, for such calamities.

The matter of population control in the comparison between the two mega-countries is even more intriguing. On the face of it, China looks like the clear winner. Indices of food production per head in the years 1978-1981, at the base rate of 100, show China at 192 in 1996-7, as compared to India at 130. So in this Super Bowl of survival, regimented and authoritarian China looks the better team in comparison to disorganized and democratic India. Yet it is important to bear in mind that both teams are doing very well in Malthus's cruel race compared, say, to Africa, which ended 1996-7 with an appalling measure of 96.

Among the "Malthusian" countries in the world, China and India are at the top of the league in escaping the Malthusian situation. But between the two, China is ahead in "succeeding" at reducing the average number of children born per woman to 1.9, as compared to 3.1 in India. Isn't this fact, too, an advertisement for China over India, for authoritarianism over democracy? This was precisely the argument that was used by Indira and Rajiv Gandhi to support their cruel policy of sterilization during the "emergency period" of the 1970s, when the two suspended democracy in India.

Yet the Gandhis' argument was swiftly refuted, and by democracy in action. Their cruel, coercive policy had the effect of politicizing the poverty-stricken electorate of India, and provoking it to vote for

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freedom in deciding how many children Indian families were allowed to have. It was this vote that demonstrated the intense interest of the poor in freedom. Thus it turns out that birth-control in over-populated societies is not at all an argument in favor of coercive regimes. Indeed, the rejection by the electorate in India of coercive measures indicates that freedom in the eyes of the poor is not a luxury or a fantasy, it is a basic good.

Sen offers also an instrumentalist argument to counter the idea that the harsh birth-control measures of China are the only effective measures. He cites the case of Kerala, a significant region in India that can attest to the effectiveness of alternative measures for countering China's coercive ones. Kerala's measures are not only more effective, they also do not involve the horrific and systematic abortion of female fetuses in China. This is the brutal but edifying score: 16 girls to 17 boys out of 1,000 in the infant mortality rate in Kerala, as compared to 33 girls to 28 boys in China. In Kerala, freedom was used as an instrument of birth control; and so the minimal lesson from the comparison between Kerala and China is that the measures used in China are not the only effective ones.

Sen is not a rights fanatic. Consequences matter. But then he is not a utilitarian either, to whom rights mean little and beneficial consequences mean a great deal. In his Buddha-like manner, Sen seeks the middle way between rights and utilities. His middle way is to define the rights of families, and especially the rights of women, in deciding how many children to have; but he is highly attuned to the social consequences of such decisions. How to combine the two is too long and too complicated a story to tell, but again the instructive case of the Indian states Kerala and Tamil Nadu indicates the way. Both states had a higher fertility rate than China before China launched its coercive policy of one-child families and before they launched their voluntary programs. By encouraging high female participation in gaining employment and in extensive voluntary family-planning programs, the two Indian states achieved a much higher decline in fertility than did China.

Throughout his book, and not only with respect to rights and consequences, Sen displays a remarkable ability to listen to views from right, left, and center. He tries to distill the truth in each of those standpoints, and to combine those elements of truth coherently. This syncretic approach may give the impression that Sen sometimes blurs the sharp features of those worldviews in order to incorporate them into his picture. He seems to be too nice and respectful both to Karl Marx and to Gary Becker, as if each in his own way carried the living word of God. But this is the weakness of a great strength, which is Sen's proven skill at being enlightened by very different and irreconcilable perspectives.

Sen's book tackles, and refutes, two claims. The first we have already met: that Asians (a generic term for the non-West, or the developing world) cannot afford freedom. The second is that Asians do not value freedom, that freedom is not one of the "Asian values." For freedom, the argument goes, is not a universal value; it is rather a value endemic to the West, the parochial product of specifically Western conditions and cultures; and the Orient has a different set of values and a different set of notions about the individual and society—values and notions that are far and apart from those of the Enlightenment.

In 1850, in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx wrote: "When our European reactionaries, on their next flight through Asia, will have finally reached the Chinese Wall, the gates that lead to the seat of primeval reaction and Conservatism—who knows, perhaps they will read the following inscription on the Wall: *Republique Chinoise—Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité.*" Well, now we know that Marx's little dream was an illusion. Nothing of the sort is to be found on the Wall. Especially not *Liberté*, negating as it does the "Asian values" that are propounded by Asian reactionaries (and also by European reactionaries, who concur in the denial of universalism).

The argument about the incompatibility of freedom with the values of the East (mostly Asia and the Islamic world) is even more seductive than the "cannot afford freedom" argument. For the governments who propound the argument, it is so self-serving; and they find unexpected support from certain precincts of Western culture, whose multi-culti relativism and anti-Enlightenment sentiment can make liberty sound downright offensive. Sen is exceedingly sensitive to cultural differences, by being genuinely at home in a culture of the East and in a culture of the West; but he revolts against the vulgar and manipulative idea of "Asian values" that does not count freedom and toleration among them.

Sen cites an impressive list of philosopher kings, such as the Emperor Ashoka of the third century B.C., who shaped an Asian set of political values—and promoted a public ethics that meets the strictest universalist standards. Ashoka covered his empire with stone inscriptions describing the good life and good government, such as this one: "A man must

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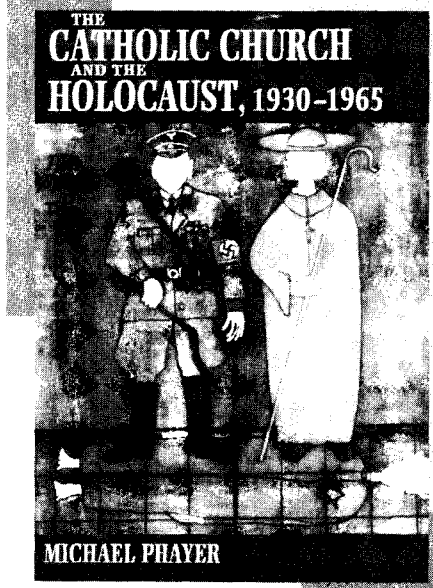

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not do reverence to his own sect or disparage that of another without reason." In a vast and ancient tradition, of course, one can find almost any view and almost any proof text. But Sen marshals quite an impressive list of counter-examples to the "Asian values" argument—enough, certainly, to convince a reader that the autocrats in Asia have no monopoly on the argument from authenticity. There is a basis in their traditions for Asian democrats, too.

SEN IS ONE of the most essential teachers of universalism in this diabolically particularist age. His philosophical priorities were nicely captured in the title of the Romanes Lecture that he delivered in Oxford in 1998: "reason before identity". Not reason *without* identity; just reason *before* identity. And never, never identity before reason, or identity without reason. Some of his reflections on the urgency of universalism in the contemporary world are worth quoting at length:

> We can, of course, "discover" our identity in the sense that we may find out that we have a connection or a descent of which we were previously unaware. A person may discover that he is Jewish. In Rabindranath Tagore's novel *Gora*, the problematic hero, also called Gora, who champions Hindu customs and traditions and is a staunch religious conservative is placed in some confusion when his supposed mother tells him that he was adopted as an infant by the Indian family after his Irish parents had been killed by the mutineers. We do discover many things about ourselves, even when they may not be as foundational as the one that the Hindu nationalist Gora had to face.
>
> To recognize this is not the same as making identity just a matter of discovery even when the person discovers something very important about herself. There are still issues of choice to be faced. The person who discovers that she is Jewish would still have to decide what importance to give to that identity compared with other competing identities—of nationality, class, political belief, and so on. Gora had to ask whether he should continue his championing of Hindu conservatism or see himself as something else, and the choice that emerges in his case (to wit, seeing himself as just Indian without a caste or a sect) is, to a great extent, a matter of reflected decision. Choices have to be made even when discoveries occur....
>
> Some of my own disturbing memories as I was entering my teenage years in India in the mid-1940s relate to the massive identity shift that followed divisive politics. People's identities as Indians, as Asians, or as members of the human race seemed to give way—quite suddenly—to sectarian identification with Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh communities. The broadly Indian of January was rapidly and unquestioningly transformed into the narrowly Hindu or finely Muslim of March. The carnage that followed had much to do with unreasoned herd behaviour by which people, as it were, "discovered" their new divisive and belligerent identities, and failed to subject the process to critical examination. The same people were suddenly different.
>
> If some of us today continue to be suspicious of the communitarian approach, despite its attractive features, including the focus on within-group solidarity and on benign affection for others in the group, there is some historical reason for it. Indeed, within-group solidarity can go hand-in-hand with between-group discord. I believe that similarly unreasoned identity shifts have occurred and are continuing to occur in different parts of the world—in the former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda, in Congo, in Indonesia—in varying forms, with devastating effects. There is something deeply debilitating about denying choice when choice exists, for it is an abdication of responsibility to consider and assess how one should think and what one should identify with. It is a way of falling prey to unreasoned shifts in alleged self-knowledge based on a false belief that one's identity is to be discovered and accepted rather than examined and scrutinized.

Those are the words of a man who is an Asian democrat, and a Western democrat; but who is most accurately described, in his own universalist spirit, as a democrat, full stop. The noun has no need of the adjectives. The idea has roots in all the traditions, but it is the same in all the traditions, because all the traditions are human traditions. ■

A Life At The Races

By DAVID THOMSON

Groucho: The Life and Times of Julius Henry Marx by Stefan Kanfer

(Alfred A. Knopf, 465 pp., $30)

Monkey Business: The Lives and Legends of the Marx Brothers by Simon Louvish

(St. Martin's, 471 pp., $25.95)

DESPITE THE APPALLING risk to sense, order, and decency, it is good to see so much attention falling again on Leonard Marx, and his brothers Adolph and Julius, if only because it prompts my ten-year-old son to see the cartoons on the book review pages and ask, "Who was that?" He is pointing at the leering wraith with the daubed-on mustache, the cigar, the spectacles, and the inter-lewd eyes. And this Grouchus hasn't taken a collapsible step yet, or cut the west wind of ignominy with the whine of his voice. Yet the boy likes the idea that Julius Henry Marx was known as "Groucho," though he has never seen Groucho on screen—and it is going to be a hard sell to get him to sit down with any of the classics on the VCR.

So, more or less, we beat on, bored and au courant, and the Marx Brothers are recognized now as an image or a logo—three unlikely parts of the same ordeal or endgame (call it family). You see the image sometimes, in murals in Los Angeles, in books about the Jazz Age, on postage stamps, at costume balls—those things that try to assert the continuity of a living, breathing culture, as opposed to the dislocation of "icons" that no one quite remembers well enough to identify. The real secret to the rueful bloodlust in Groucho's

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eyes was not just that the girls and the money were slipping away and likely to fall into the witless grasp of the world's Chicos. It was that "Groucho" could be just a word and a name, like "Rin Tin Tin" beneath the portrait of so many vibrant German shepherds; and some of those dogs had a heartbroken look that could have been kin to Groucho.

Such thoughts bear on the way that movie history is leaking away, and on the enormous difficulty of presenting something like a biography of the Marx Brothers. Stefan Kanfer and Simon Louvish are both enormous enthusiasts, and Kanfer has a true calling for the wretched closing decades of Groucho's life. As for Louvish, he has optimistic traits usually confined to large hotels—such as omitting the thirteenth chapter. Experts and fans will devour both books, savoring their errors along with the gems. (No, Humphrey Bogart was never married to Virginia Mayo, but suppose he had been: Lauren Bacall might be playing bridge in Poughkeepsie.) Kanfer's book is better told, but I am sure that both writers had a hell of a time with what is called research.

So much of the trouble for these books rests in the way the Marx Brothers—as unquestioned celebrities for at least twenty years—spilled out their seen and heard in a huge variety of unreliable places, everything from show-business interviews to books to set on library shelves. Some of what they said may be true, or half-true; but they spent their lives in the instant response attitude, when asked a question, of saying something funny. And if asked about your brothers, admit that you barely survived them. The philosophy of their act affected everything. They were guys—even Harpo—who could not regard small-talk as anything but a chance to make wisecracks. Wives without number despaired of talking to Groucho, because any offhand remark was gobbled up as innuendo. (And some of those wives were his own.) The minutiae of ordinary life were not the street, the time of day, the weather, whatever; they were the banana peels waiting on the sidewalk.

Consider this bit of "life" from Kanfer's book. In 1907, at the age of sixteen, Julius was out on his own in show business, though their awesome and terrifying mother and manager, Minnie Marx, made no secret of the opinion that Julius was a far tougher sell than Leonard or Adolph. He was, by nature, too serious and aloof. Maybe he was really an actor or a singer, or maybe an educated person? He had a small part in a play called *A Man of Her Own*, and he lived on $10 a week. This was enough for the sixteen-year-old to buy himself a warm hooker for the night.

Groucho Marx by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

Kanfer takes up the story:

> In a few minutes he had lost his virginity and acquired a case of gonorrhea. Julius's childhood was effectively over—over, but not finished. If, as Graham Greene has suggested, a writer's capital is his childhood, a comedian draws even more fervently on the same source: the memories of humiliation and resentment, of real bullies and tyrannical schoolmasters, of neighborhood characters and family members. An unhappy childhood seems a requisite for humorists, and virtually all who depend on public laughter have drawn on early psychic wounds and deprivations. But there was a central difference between Julius and his contemporaries. Those comedians constructed their routines around the child buried deep within. Julius was about to make a very different statement. No ripening process was possible for a youth thrust onstage and kept there throughout his adolescence. His way of coping was to inter the adult and present a child persona to the public. His brothers followed suit; soon they would all be boys dressed up as men in funny faces and outlandish costumes, like celebrants en route to a costume party.

That is on page thirty-one of Kanfer's book, and it is the first self-conscious descent into "what this book is really about." As such, it is promising: I can see the point of extended childhood, even if the abrupt end to Julius's innocence does not entirely fit with it. But in what is dressed up as a definitive biography (there is even a comparison with Boswell and Johnson on the dust-jacket), there is no source note to say how we know about the hooker—or to help us to decide whether to believe in her. Whereas Louvish (who does have source notes and sauce, too) introduces the possibility so far out of context (and so far beyond the reach of his inept index) that I had to read the whole book to find it. He attributes the story to a *Playboy* interview and behaves as if it could have been boasting!

Does Louvish think the story is publicity? I went a little deeper, as far back as Hector Arce's book *Groucho*, published in 1979, only two years after Julius's death. He does report the hooker. He places her in Montreal, and he has the girl leading Julius down into a cellar. She had great legs, he recalled in old age. Which is something like a glimmer of satisfaction creeping in between Kanfer's blunt linkage of sexual act and the clap. Surely the sixteen-year-old had a moment of pleasure (if indeed he ever liked sex), before the consequences sank in. Still, even Arce cuts to the bad news: he has Groucho saying, "She gave me the clap. The first time I got laid and I got the clap. You know,

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once you have it, you never get over it. The vestiges of that always remain in some part of your body."

Now, Arce knew and talked to Groucho. He had a signed letter from the man authorizing his book, as well as Groucho's grim instruction that he "tell it all," which likely refers to the ugliness of those last years, a domestic melodrama Arce had witnessed firsthand, as Groucho fell under the sway of his last young woman, Erin Fleming. But didn't Groucho say something about the hooker in his own book, *Memoirs of a Mangy Lover*, which appeared in 1963? (You see how much German shepherd there was in the man.) So where do we stand? Did Groucho shoot a line—especially if it made him look like an idiot? What I do not understand is why Kanfer does not quote Groucho's remarkable words on the long-term effects, or offer any solid medical comment on how real those fears were. For that surely says a lot more than references to Graham Greene can conjure up, and more than any assertion about how our later lives are shaped to heal childhood wounds.

I also think that a biographer might try to answer the reader's really pressing question: how would a hard-up kid have been treated for the clap in 1907? Was the cure so rough-and-ready as to explain Groucho's worry about remaining infectious, or even the old man's more extensive anxiety about being beyond cure? That could be a more plausible explanation for Groucho's hapless times with women than any kind of Greene glow. Groucho had three wives, and a lot of one-night stands along the way. When he died, it was after a prolonged legal battle with Erin Fleming, whom he met in 1971, and who had taken his life over because she had the will and the determination to ignore the comic's steady "joking" abuse of her, in those marvelous putdowns that are poured like acid syrup over the generous slopes of Margaret Dumont.

This is where it becomes so hard to separate the material of biography from mere comic material. I have always felt that natural (and inescapable) victimhood made Groucho the heart of the Marx Brothers—and victimhood (call it tragedy, if you're looking for Oscars) is one way to make biography work. (In passing, I would add that it is the passionate self-destruction in W.C. Fields that makes *Man on the Flying Trapeze*, Louvish's 1997 life of that other sour clown, more coherent and satisfying than either of these Marxist biographies.)

LEONARD (CHICO) WAS Minnie Marx's favorite. He was also a womanizer and a gambler of such little restraint or shame as to be dramatically uninteresting, save for the fact that his mother preferred such a vulgarian. Chico was stupid, but he keeps getting the better of Groucho, who has the extra humiliation of speaking English, and who as early as the late 1920s plainly yearned for the bookish company of T.S. Eliot, Dick Cavett, and E.B. White. Adolph (Harpo) was happy and serene. He married, stayed married, adopted four children, raised them well, and exuded sweetness. That was life. On screen, Harpo is the benign alien, the blond explosion, struck dumb by the fire in his head. He has two main behavior traits: the yielding to sickly harp solos and the riotous pursuit of every young female he sees, all to the klaxon drumbeat of id, id, id. He is the sweetest barbarian we know.

Groucho's tattered intellect is horribly trapped between these two cretins. He is the figure most charged with plot responsibility, whereas they are the suppliers of interludes and interruptions, as well as forces of disorderly flow who need no narrative shaping. They are dead ends, but Groucho is the feeble vestige of story. He wants women and money, and he is at least within desert-island sight of those steamships that stand for culture, civilization, and education. Yet all those hopes are wrecked and mocked by the animalistic energy and stamina of Chico and Harpo. By being so much closer to raw nature, they have a strength that Groucho lacks. Thus the full onus of failure, and the measure of pathos, rests with Groucho. He is in the superior yet wretched position of being able to gaze at the camera, and at us, and beg for our useless sympathy.

As such, he is the only one who has anything like an actor's persona or weight. Both Louvish and Kanfer are very good (and pretty funny) at showing how the boys and Minnie were ready to try anything on the way to getting an act that worked—and drew applause. And Louvish, with his training in Fields, is very good at grasping the character of the vaudeville in which they struggled. Kanfer's argument, that the brothers exploited a model of arrested development, is fair enough—but it misses the extent to which Groucho hears voices (or ideals) denied to his brothers.

Groucho is the brother who might have passed—but for having fallen into the company of such sublime, lovable, and tireless idiots. He has had the worst luck, and that is why the act functions. He was always more likely to rise to abuse than praise. At the London Coliseum, in 1920, the audience was so ugly they started to throw pennies at the Brothers. The old English penny, defined by police as a possibly lethal weapon: "spend a penny" in parts of south London is still code for acts of unseemly violence. Whereupon Groucho leaped to the footlights and begged for the lighter shilling instead—a quicker way of paying for their journey home.

Audiences in those days were easily led astray. In Nagadoches, Texas, Groucho said, the crowd deserted the boys on stage because of stories of an errant mule outside. (Mules in Nagadoches hitherto had been too cowed by the heat to be interesting.) Finally they straggled back to find the brothers waiting to harangue them. The insults were thick and inventive, with Groucho claiming that "Nagadoches was for roaches." It was shortly thereafter that the wretched town—unfindable in a gazeteer—was traded to Mexico.

GROUCHO CARRIED ON, of course, as Chico and Harpo couldn't. *Love Happy* (1947) was the last true Marx Brothers film (and the one in which Groucho catches sight of a young Marilyn Monroe). The only other time that they appeared in a film (and not together) was the inane *The Story of Mankind*, in which Harpo played Sir Isaac Newton. Chico died in 1961, a card-player and little else. Harpo published a book—*Harpo Speaks!*—and died in 1964. Long before then, however, the Groucho that might have been had felt the urge for new worlds.

Kanfer tells two-thirds of that story: how, in 1947, Groucho was soldiering on in radio. He was signed on for the Walgreen radio show, and he was to be cued by the host, Bob Hope, with the line, "Why, Groucho Marx! What are you doing out here in the Sahara desert?" He had been provided with a scripted answer; but the show dragged on and in fact Groucho answered: "Desert, hell! I've been standing in a drafty corridor for forty-five minutes." Hope burst out laughing. He dropped his script. Groucho stood on it and launched into improvs about a famous Los Angeles madam. Hope joined in and the two of them fenced like gay blades for twenty-five minutes.

Directly, this led to Groucho getting the offer to host *You Bet Your Life* on television. The show ran for eleven seasons and kept Groucho—with a real mustache now—as the quick-tongued tease of his show's contestants. He was terrific at it, but *You Bet Your Life* is often nowadays the reason people remember him—just as Orson Welles is sometimes esteemed as a salesman for jug wine. As I say, Kanfer tells only two-thirds of the story, because he holds back again. He says that the dialogue on the wing with Hope "was transcribed," but he never lets us hear any of it. This is like invoking the clap without recounting its depleting treatment. It is an odd trait in biography, especially when Kanfer declares himself so much an admirer of the ad-libbing instinct in his subject. And,

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of course, this very capacity to speak for himself is one more thing that put Groucho so far ahead of Harpo and Chico, and left him so much more vulnerable.

There is a built-in scenario in the TV Groucho who could talk anyone down, and be loved for it, and the scourge of wives sent out of the room in tears by his barbs. Is cruelty the word? Does the answer depend on whether you are Groucho or the wives? Is it just that comedy gives an uneasy extra liberty to unkindness? Erin Fleming was less another Margaret Dumont (who elects to ignore Groucho's worst insults—a further castration) than the hand that rocked the cradle of an old guy who was cracking up. It is a wonder in these ghoulish and professionally cruel times that we have not had a movie of the last years of Groucho. What a farewell it could be for Billy Wilder, with Jack Lemmon as the fragile Groucho, and Julia Roberts as this other Erin....

Sooner or later, clowns are remembered for such disasters, and Groucho may yet resemble Charles Foster Kane in his last years. But this celebration of the Marx boys is a fair moment to wonder what is happening to this country's great tradition of screen comedy, especially the form called physical comedy. Again, I don't think that we are going to get the kids any longer to sit down with the treasury of the Marx Brothers, Fields, Keaton, Chaplin, or Harry Langdon. Even children today sense that there is a gross-out factor in comedy that gets steadily nastier every few years. So for now the question is just how far Jim Carrey or Eddie Murphy can go. I mean, will go. And Carrey, I suspect, is every bit as deserving of our attention as Groucho was, and every bit as tortured by wondering whether it is his melancholy or his rare good humor that serves him best as a clown.

Maybe, when all is said and done, film is an unlikely medium for the "anarchic" comedy that we admire in these guys. When so much is canned, premeditated, labored over, and set down in stranglehold permanence, it is remarkable that spontaneity ever survives. From Keaton to Carrey, from Lenny Bruce to Sandra Bernhard, there have been performers who have to feel the moment and the pulse of a live audience—and then they have been asked to recreate liveness on a film set.

Louvish and Kanfer make it clear beyond dispute that the Marx Bothers were most themselves—most dangerous, most lyrical, most at play—when they were on stage, and when the collective notion took them. They were also most fraternal in those circumstances, the one picking up the other's timing, without envy or rancor. For once, at least, the shared upbringing of family life paid off. Who's to say they were not at their best in Spokane in 1923? Similarly, would you prefer the Jerry Lewis out-takes from one of his Paramount pictures, or a rough record of him and Dino doing three hours at some club before anybody raised the possibility of movies?

John Grierson, the Scots critic and documentary filmmaker, was one of the first of the Marx Brothers' fans to see the straitjacket in film. He saw great clowns—timeless figures, especially in unison. And he saw that they might go further still, "if, that is to say, the commercial cinema permits them to polish their roles, and refine the Idea that is in them," he wrote in 1930. "It is, I admit, a good deal to ask of an institution which has destroyed Langdon and cast away Raymond Griffith. What rare and noble clowns those two might have been."

When Grierson wrote those words, the Marx Brothers were still at Paramount, doing their thing with inconsequential Magritte titles: *Cocoanuts*, *Animal Crackers*, *Monkey Business*, *Horse Feathers*, *Duck Soup*. The purists say that those are the best films, the ones closest to the stage act. Yet hardly anyone alive remembers that show now. They moved on to MGM and the polite, sensible control of Irving Thalberg, who sent them out under such useful titles as *A Night at the Opera* and *A Day at the Races*. It was part of Thalberg's genius that he was wary of the wildness in the boys, and so he pushed songs and romantic sub-plots into their pictures. The results are less pure, but the boys doted on Irving. The anarchists wanted a kind boss.

Jim Carrey, I daresay, ponders that every day, and when he stops laughing at possible new jokes and routines, there is still time for the rictus grin of horror to settle in if someone says "Raymond Griffith" in tones that plainly demand respect and reverence. And remembrance. Comedy comes quickly, and goes faster. ■

Writing the history of time.

Greenwich Village

By D. Graham Burnett

I.

At 4:45 PM, on the afternoon of February 15, 1894, a Thursday, a sharp pop sounded unexpectedly below the north wall of the Greenwich Observatory. Setting aside a series of astronomical calculations, two curious observatory staffers trotted to the gate and peered down the path that led from the distant Thames, crossed the broad green turf, and mounted the steep hill to their chronometric fastness. What they found was not pretty. The majority of Martial Bourdin, a 26-year-old Frenchman, lay on that path, but a not insignificant amount of him had been spread unevenly across the sixty yards separating his body from the wall of the observatory compound. What was clear was that Bourdin had been carrying a highly explosive device up to Christopher Wren's red-brick baroque manor-house *cum* celestial citadel, to the buildings that housed the instruments that defined the prime meridian of the world. What was not clear, and has remained a mystery ever since, was why.

In the weeks that followed, foreign anarchists took the rap—round-ups and deportations cut into loose London networks of heavily accented *Autonomistes*, free-form dissenters, and sundry visionary agitators from the lower classes. But the meaning of Bourdin's failed gesture of chrono-terrorism remained elusive. Joseph Conrad called it "a blood-stained inanity of so fatuous a kind that it was impossible to fathom its origin by any reasonable or even unreasonable process of thought." Between the puff of pink mist in the park and the unscratched walls of the observatory, he asserted, there was "nothing resembling an idea, anarchistic or other." Here lay a formidable challenge to his narrative imagination: an act apparently beyond the explanatory power of sanity and craziness alike; an eruption of ideological violence unencumbered by any actual idea.

Piqued, Conrad set to work on what

D. Graham Burnett's book, *Masters of All They Surveyed: Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado*, has just been published by the University of Chicago Press.

The Story of Time
by Kristen Lippincott et al.
(Merrell Holberton, 304 pp., $45)

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would become one of his very greatest novels, *The Secret Agent*. There he accounted for the unaccountable, weaving an explanation of the Greenwich plot as deliciously perverse and maddeningly irrational as the geopolitics of modernity: in his fiction the botched job was the brainchild of reactionary, repressive forces, anxious to shake the British from their romantic commitment to personal liberty. From the perspective of these pluto-aristocratic internationalists, the English public seemed distressingly attached to protecting the rights of every impecunious nonconformist and radical. Only an act of gratuitous and destructive blasphemy (attributed to those uppity proletarian factions), it was reasoned, can prompt John Bull to support a properly authoritarian pan-European backlash. Bombs in shops, assassinated worthies, even smoking churches—these petty acts can always be explained away as responses to understandable grievances: hunger, poverty, enthusiastic religious antipathies. But an entirely incomprehensible blow against something wholly beyond reproach—this has the power to produce mass terror.

As the shady "Mr. Vladimir" explains, "it would be really telling if one could throw a bomb into pure mathematics." And failing that, the best option is Greenwich: the international symbol of precise astronomy, the temple of pure learning, and, since the International Meridian Conference of 1884, the global *punto fijo*, the anchor of the world's spatio-temporal framework. The bomb in Greenwich promised to be the apocalypse of progressive, liberal, Victorian Britain. It would be, in more ways than one, the end of time.

Rumor has it that the most recent James Bond film, *The World Is Not Enough*, was to have reprised this chiliastic plot by having the baddies try to blow up some portion of the world from Blair's Millennium Dome (in Greenwich, of course, on the prime meridian, under the very shadow of the old observatory) just as the calendrical odometer rolled over into the year 2000. This got vetoed, in the end. Presumably the Dome had received enough bad press, and no one wanted to give unimaginative terrorists a good idea. When December 31, 1999 actually arrived, and 39 tons of (licit) explosives set the river ablaze, Greenwich—site of a $10 million police mobilization to guard against Bourdin's durable fantasy—looked suspiciously like the police state that Conrad's conspirators hoped to bring about.

That the "home of time" should keep ticking like a mine in our collective imagination points past 1894 and the misfortunes of one disgruntled French pseudo-anarchist to something deeper. That ticking, one is tempted to suggest, is nothing less than the sound of the heart shared by the mechanical clock and the bomb. Time and death tap in step.

This is an old truth. Ancient, even. The Orphic cults of the primordial Eastern Mediterranean made the relationship genealogical: *Chronos*, the ur-father, begat *Chaos*. The global catalogue of similar myths would be long indeed; but there is no need to go trolling through the nebulous fascinations of Zurvanite heresies, Xipe flayings, or the worship of Kali, the blood-soaked aspect of Shiva, in order to demonstrate the extensive entanglements of time and destruction. Take something immensely concrete—say, a time-bomb. For all the fuss the French made on discovering, at the height of the Napoleonic Wars, what they called "*les machines infernales des Anglais*" (clockwork charges used to scuttle ships at anchor), the time-bomb's lineage stretches back practically to the origins of the clock itself.

COURTESY NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, LONDON

Silvio Belli, "Libro del Misurar con la vista," 1569

That wondrous innovation of the early fourteenth century, the weight-driven, escapement-regulated clockwork, found its way briskly into the service of that perennial human project: destroying cities. In a delicately illustrated pyrotechnical handbook from 1568, preserved (ironically enough) in Dresden, an early modern blaster and bomb-smith detailed the booby-trapping of a city to be abandoned to its besiegers:

> One can, with hidden buried explosives, throw such an obstacle in the face of the enemy that within two or three days he will come to regret his conquest: namely by placing, buried into the earth, one great fireball, or several in various places in the chambers and rooms and also in the stables, with a running clock attached with a fire lock ... A number of such hidden explosives can be delayed as long as one wishes, and set at such hour as one desires.

The same device that could, on cue, swing the bell-hammer of an automated *jacquemart* to announce the hour required little modification to trip the striking arm of the newest thing in firearm mechanisms, the *snaphaunce*, a forerunner of the flintlock. From tick, tock, *ding!* to tick, tock, *BOOM!* required just a bit of fiddling, and less than a century.

Not that the latter hadn't been on people's minds even earlier. When the Renaissance Spanish cleric Cristóbal Gonçalez recorded his *Considraciones sobre el Psalmo 133* ("Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"), he interpreted universal harmony in terms of an extended metaphor that drew on the new clockwork technologies:

> If we look at a clock we shall find therein a whole host of springs, wheels, chains, pins, cogs, and weights, all of which move and function so that a bell, placed in the topmost part of the mechanism rings and strikes the hour ... After this fashion we may philosophize about the whole fabric of the world, which is like a clock, set by God on those mighty wheels of the heavens.

Gonçalez recognized an unexpected

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aspect of this analogy: the whole of the clock worked to ring the big bell at the appointed time—and in the same way, the whole of the heavens were arranged for what? To sound the final trump when the hour came! The "clockwork universe," so fascinating to both theologians and natural philosophers well into the seventeenth century, was actually an alarm-clockwork universe, in which the big bell would ring the apocalypse itself. We live, as Gonçalez pointed out, in the ultimate time-bomb. Newton himself, equally involved in the mechanics of the celestial mechanism and the precise exegesis of the Revelation of Saint John the Divine, would have agreed.

Conrad grasped the predicament so thoroughly that he made the ultimate time-bomb a central figure in *The Secret Agent*. The pale presence of death who haunts the book, "the Professor," has only one aim in life: "a perfect detonator." As he puts it, "I am trying to invent a detonator that would adjust itself to all conditions of action, and even to unexpected changes of conditions. A variable and yet perfectly precise mechanism. A really intelligent detonator." The device that he designed to blow up Greenwich combined a clockwork countdown with an inertial override: it would go off in twenty minutes unless it was bumped first. It thus had both an inner temporal order and an acute sensitivity to local conditions.

Too acute, in fact. It went off prematurely when it was accidentally dropped. Undaunted, however, the Professor presses on, always carrying on his person a guarantee of personal inviolability in the form of a suicide engine: an explosive he can trigger by squeezing a bulb in his pocket. We are to understand, of course, that *he* is the intelligent detonator, and as such the very angel of the apocalypse. And yet he has been unable to make even that device truly perfect: try as he might, he cannot make it instantaneous—a delay of twenty seconds must be endured between his hitting the switch and the fiery end. One senses Conrad playing on the image of real Apocalypse: "When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."

II.

Recently the Queen's House of the National Maritime Museum (a square-ish sugar-candy by Inigo Jones that sits at the base of Greenwich Hill) hosted an exhibition called "The Story of Time," more than 500 objects arranged to offer an "all-encompassing history of time across the earth from the earliest civilization." Until very recently, it was possible to leave this stimulating show, and cross town, and terminate all reflection on time by going upstairs in the British Museum for a look at "The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come," where three large rooms documented the pervasive and plastic legacy of the Book of Revelation's imagery. Both shows have been rendered more permanent by large and glossy books, heavily illustrated and larded with uneven essays.

The British Museum's volume, edited by Frances Carey, shares in that show's scholarly, not to say dutiful, feel: many a Renaissance German woodcutter, from Augsburg to Worms, tried his hand at the suite of Revelation images that Dürer made immortal at the end of the fifteenth century. Their many Whores of Babylon share a wanton plumpness, their seven-headed beasts snarl nastily, one after the other. To be sure, there is much more to the legacy of the apocalypse than this: David Bindman's essay casts light on a collection of garish English popular prints from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many of which deploy apocalyptic imagery to slander the French Revolution and its spawn; and sections on the World Wars and the "celluloid apocalypse" demonstrate the durability of Saint John's terrible visions. Still, it is the ranks of studious, pug-nosed, Teutonic images of destruction—the early, intaglio versions of what comes down to us as the Iron Maiden album cover—that predominate. The apocalypse is a rather long-faced business in most of the Western traditions, and the Germans do deserve a special place in the story, again and again.

"The Story of Time" exhibition is rangier, baggier, more wackily encyclopedic. How else to characterize the juxtaposition of three stuffed stoats, Jasper Johns's *Four Seasons* prints, and several rooms packed with astrolabes and sundials? But the show is also, for all its curiosity-cabinet sensibilities (or perhaps because of them), a good deal more fun. If the text of the catalogue induces a number of groans ("Cultures that have grown within an unpredictable or hostile environment often see the universe as being similarly fraught with dangers"), only a dull soul could read it without any stimulation. Kirsten Lippincott, the director of the Royal Observatory Greenwich and the show's curator, has tried to bring order to the profusion of things temporal under five headings: the creation, the measurement, the depiction, the experience, and (inevitably) the end of time. And as keeper of the Greenwich flame, and steward of its large collection of antique navigational and chronometric instruments, Lippincott's interests clearly lean toward mensuration; and about half of *The Story of Time* deals with time's

Can a Darwinian be a Christian?

The Relationship Between Science and Religion

Michael Ruse

"This is a closely reasoned yet dramatically constructed argument that addresses one of the fundamental issues of all time. It contains the best explanation now available of the relation of evolutionary thought to Christianity, and thence to religion as a whole."

—E. O. Wilson, Harvard University, Author of *Consilience*

This book addresses a question at the heart of the current debate about the relationship between science and religion, in particular between that form of evolutionary biology known as Darwinism, and the basic tenets of the Christian faith. That question is: can someone who accepts Darwin's theory of natural selection subscribe at the same time to the essential claims of Christianity?

He deals with major figures in the current science/religion debate (for example Richard Dawkins, Stephen Jay Gould and E.O. Wilson on the science side, as well as Arthur Peacocke, Robert J. Russell and Keith Ward on the religion side).

Michael Ruse argues that, although it is at times difficult for a Darwinian to embrace Christian belief, it is by no means inconceivable. At the same time he suggests ways in which a Christian believer should have no difficulty accepting evolution in general, and Darwinism in particular.

Writing with verve and avoiding technical jargon, Michael Ruse has produced an important contribution to a sometimes overheated debate for anyone interested in, and perhaps even troubled by these issues, who seeks an informed and judicious guide.

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measurement at both the calendrical and the horary scales—from Egyptian gnomons and Babylonian planispheres to the BBC's "six pips" time signal.

HISTORIANS HAVE TAKEN the history of timekeeping seriously for quite a while. Pliny, in fact, summed up his history of technology chapter in the *Historia Naturalis* by asserting that the measurement of the hours was one of the first three things to be agreed upon by all civilized nations. (It immediately followed consensus on the shaving of male facial hair.) But while the history of timekeeping has never really been overlooked, until quite recently it has been treated in two very different ways.

The inner workings of clocks and watches—the detailed history of these complex pieces of technology—have been the provenance of highly specialized horologists, often collectors and connoisseurs, antiquarian in spirit and interested in timekeeping mostly as a sequence of mechanical challenges progressively surmounted by the inspired craftsman. But while these types gathered around the back of the clock to get a look at the moving parts, another group of historians kept their distance, gesturing at clocks as either symbols of, or the impetus to, vast sociological transformations in European history. For Engels, for instance, as for Marx, the factory clock represented the transformation of agrarian work rhythms into the monetized time regimens of capitalist exploitation. Weber saw in the same device further evidence of the spiritual order that made capitalism possible: the clock had been a central feature of monastic life. (Indeed, the mechanical clock may have been invented by a Benedictine monk trying to figure out how to ensure that he and his brethren did not sleep past the "eighth hour" winter reveille stipulated in the order's rules.)

For Weber, the temporal order of the factory mirrored that of the monastery. A series of twentieth-century French historians (Marc Bloch, Jacques LeGoff) built on these ideas, and those of Weber's rough contemporary Gustav Bilfinger, to argue that the rise of mechanical time-measurement in Europe, and the spread of public striking clocks from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, amounted to nothing less than the rise of modern, urban, bourgeois life. Down went the cycles of "church time" and pastoral seasons; and in came the linear time of merchants and modernity, the hustle of time-as-money, the ringing sound of a secular civil regime.

Between the grand theorists who wove these arguments and the open-case horological historians, few words passed. The astronomical tower clock of Su Sung helped to change this. In the late 1950s, Joseph Needham, the great authority on Chinese science, and Derek de Solla Price, a leading historian of technology, began to collaborate on a history of this stupefying device, essentially unknown in the Western historical tradition, which has long been content to dismiss the mechanical skills of the East. It turned out that in the eleventh century, a Chinese engineer named Han Kung-lien designed and built an enormous clock, more than forty feet in height, which used an elegant escapement-regulated water-wheel to turn the elements of a complex model of the heavens—the paths of the planets, the sun, and the fixed stars, all as seen from earth. Nothing of comparable sophistication existed anywhere in Europe for several hundred years, and it seems possible that the Su Sung *astrarium* kept better time than any device on earth until the invention of the pendulum clock by Christiaan Huygens in the late 1650s.

WHY DIDN'T chronometrics thrive in China in the years after the Su Sung clock's destruction? Could such a wonder have been simply a technological dead end? These questions fit nicely into what came to be known as the "Needham Problem," namely, why did the "scientific revolution" happen in Europe, when, on so many fronts, the Chinese seemed much farther "ahead" much earlier? Needham believed that China's contributions to the history of science and technology had been forgotten and obscured, and he argued, with Price, that rumors of the Su Sung clock must have made their way during the medieval period across Asia, into Islamic countries, and from there to Europe, where they provided the inspiration for the development of the escapement—that essential inner bit of the mechanical clock, the part that, by tipping back and forth, stops a weight-driven wheel from just accelerating (as the weight falls), and instead turns its motion into a series of little, equal ticks.

What Price and Needham were proposing was a new origin for the mechanical clock: it came (however indirectly) from China, and it began in an effort not to keep the hours of the day, but to model the universe. Forget the monks trying to figure out what time to wake up. The origins of the clock lay in loftier things. With all the exuberance of discovery, Price gave this new account a stirring turn of phrase: "The mechanical clock is nought but a fallen angel from the world of astronomy!"

Here were big claims. They might be right, and they might be wrong; but deciding them would demand attention to the history of precision instrumentation—Greek gearing, mechanical astrolabes, the earliest escapements—and of the communities tinkering with the devices. Were they interested in the workings of the cosmos? Or in the correct schedule for vespers? Were they interested in astronomy? Or mere "time measurement" for quotidian affairs?

The bad news is that there is currently no strong consensus on answers to these questions, though not for lack of effort. The archives of Europe have been ransacked, but there seems to be no "smoking gun" on the inventor of the escapement clockwork in the West, so his links to Eastern learning (assuming a "he" here) cannot be known. Moreover, the Needham Problem has fallen from grace a bit, as historians of European science have spent much more time in the last twenty years calling into question just what the scientific revolution actually was (if anything). This has left little time to think about why other folk were not having one.

Still, Price and Needham inspired a new kind of time history, work that combined big-theory hypotheses with inside-the-case attention to detail. One might point, for instance, to David Landes's wonderful book *Revolution in Time* (1983), which combined a meticulous history of the precision watch with a sweeping argument for the rise of "private time": the internalization of time discipline that those instruments made possible. The integration of scholarly perspectives has greatly raised the bar for what the history of time can be. It has made these studies harder to do (and perhaps to read), but much, much richer.

III.

WE HAVE, IN our individual consciousnesses, an "experience" of time. Presumably human beings have always had such an experience. At the same time, societies must share temporal orders—units of duration, sequences of these units—if people are to cohere in the most rudimentary ways. It seems impossible to imagine that the systems used for measuring time—sundials, clocks, the migrations of birds—have not played central roles in both of these encounters with time, the existential and the social.

It is one thing to say this in a general way, another to try to triangulate personal, cultural, and "technical" time in a particular instance. Yet this is what the new historiography of time demands. When someone pulls it off, the results sparkle. In a recent essay on Einstein, for example, Peter Galison has shown that one of the most remarkable and abstract innovations in twentieth-century physics, rela-

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tivity theory, cannot properly be understood without considering the contemporary efforts to standardize railroad clocks across extensive networks in Europe, systems that were part of a broader transformation in the experience of time at the turn of the century (a story told by Stephen Kern in his book *The Cultures of Time and Space, 1880-1918*). The patents for such electronic distributed time devices, interestingly, were the young Einstein's responsibility in his day-job at the Bern patent office.

The Story of Time is essentially a gallery of images, and its short interpretive essays must survey large areas—"Time and Space in Islam," "Cyclical and Linear Concepts of Time in China," "Time and Art in the Twentieth Century"—and therefore cannot do the subtle work that I have been describing. Yet *The Story of Time* has been informed by these trends in the historical literature, as well as by the insights of archaeo-astronomers (who have contributed much to current understanding of the temporal regimes of ancient civilizations, particularly those of the Americas) and anthropologists (whose discipline can be said to have been in part founded, via Durkheim, on the investigation of time as a social reality). Moreover, there are compensatory advantages to the breadth and the diversity found here. What *The Story of Time* does best is cast up tantalizing suggestions of how different one's sense of time might be.

The most interesting objects presented possess in their very form the power to pose this challenge. Take, for instance, the Japanese *Jikōban*, or "time incense tray," a box that enabled the hours of the day to be maintained by the sequential burning of carefully arranged scented blocks. Some versions apparently used different smells to mark the passing of time, and a particularly refined Chinese version passed the smoke of the hour through a grille in the form of the "double-happiness" character, while the ash fell through another template, leaving dust in the pattern of the character for "longevity." Here is a richly evocative clock, a moralized timekeeper that suggests a very different culture of time: slow smoldering, encompassing the senses, requiring exacting custodial attentions.

Who knows exactly how time was experienced in a seventeenth-century Buddhist monastery? Reading the description of the *Jikōban* in this book will not answer that question, nor can Joy Harvey really do justice to it in her perfectly helpful essay on "Time in a Japanese Context." Looking at the device, however, certainly makes one wonder. Particularly when one can flip forward and consider the ticking iron chamber clocks of early modern Europe. One cannot help sensing that a contemporary abbey in the Alps would have offered a very different temporal regime. Such charged, if elusive, juxtapositions abound.

My example runs the risk of catching me in the same awkward posture that *The Story of Time* sometimes adopts when facing East. It isn't precisely that one can accuse the text of a pernicious Orientalism, but rather that when the time comes to confront the mysterious qualities of time, an Asian icon is likely to follow. This was quite strongly marked in the exhibition itself, where the first room of "The Creation of Time" was dominated by a large bronze of the "Dancing Shiva," and the very last exhibit, at "The End of Time," was a large gilt "Seated Shaka" accompanied by a bit of verse on the silence of the Buddha in the face of our questions. (The book ends the same way.) A long and enlightening story could be told about the European tradition of pushing the hard questions Eastward. Over there, we have often dreamed, they have the mysteries worked out.

Anyway, to compare a ritualized and polite device such as an incense clock to a verge-and-foliot clunker is really to compare apples and oranges. After all, it is not as if Europeans did not have their own moralized and ephemeral techniques for time-telling: sacral candles and spirit lamps were marked for this purpose; and the hourglass, with its suggestive form and its quiet flow of dust, was both an extremely important tool for keeping track of time well into the modern period, and just about the most overused didactic icon of the emblematic tradition. An early fifteenth-century moralist went so far as to argue that sandglasses ought to be installed throughout public places such as schools and libraries, "so that we can see time itself flowing and fading away"—an inducement to focus on higher things.

IV.

While it cannot be denied that Europeans have infused timekeeping systems with a host of meanings, there remains a strong lingering sense that this history of moral and artistic representation is not the real story of time in the West. The real story has to lie in how it happened that Western Europeans got so obsessed by precision timekeeping that they ended up making devices more regular than the rotation of the Earth itself, devices so insanely reliable that they will not vary by more than a second in ten million years. The history of these increasingly precise timekeepers is a central part of the history of science itself: such instruments made pos-

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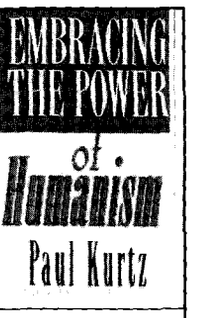
by Paul Kurtz



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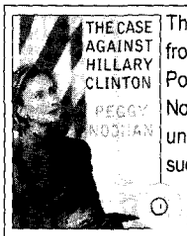

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sible the astronomical observations that have grounded theories of the physical world; and Newton's universal mechanics postulated a notion of "absolute time" that one assumes was influenced by clock-time.

The master narrative of this story is one of abstraction. What this means is that the history of timekeeping in the European scientific tradition is most easily presented as a history of separating "time" from the vagaries of the physical world, a history of purifying some sort of essential, disembodied, precisely monitored flowing, purifying it both from the contamination of symbolic hoo-ha (the Book of Genesis, the Apocalypse), and from the various things that were once taken to embody that flowing—the seasons, the movement of the sun and its shadows, even the spinning stars. The result (measured by a pendulum in a vacuum, or, now, by the oscillation of quartz crystals, or, better yet, by monitoring of the radioactivity of cesium-133) is supposed to be *just time*.

IT IS A good story, and a powerful master narrative, one that recapitulates the basic form of positivist history of science, in which conceptual advances result from a sequence of iconoclastic blows that split away the accretions of myth and spurious "meaning-making" from the resilient core of the really-real, which is made suddenly present, revealed. Sociologists of science such as Bruno Latour have gone to considerable lengths to show just how profoundly odd this theory of knowledge works out to be, what a mythopoeic drama it, in fact, embodies. Yet these criticisms demand a gymnastic intellect: one must be prepared to try to imagine a world in which our hallowed distinction between made-things and found-things dissolves, where one can look at what seems to be an autonomous "fact" of nature (say, time) and hear in that word the strange contradictions of its etymology—"fact," perhaps tellingly, traces its roots to verbs like *facere*, "to do, to make." Does this give a clue? For Latour and others it suggests that the distinction between what is real and what is made is a false one; what is real *is* what we have made.

Even if one is not persuaded by such arguments, they serve as a warning about certain master narratives of scientific progress, particularly those that depict the veritable thing under investigation being, over time, freed from encumbering layers of superfluous symbolic baggage. Where the history of time is concerned, however, the old-fashioned sort of narrative retains a great deal of appeal. There is something pleasing about the powerful scenes on which such an account trades. The German sociologist Norbert Elias believed that he had located the actual birth-moment of the Western concept of non-social, non-human time: call it 1604. It was around then that Galileo, at work on the dynamics of falling bodies, switched from using his own pulse to using a pendulum as a tool for measuring physical phenomena; and in that moment time was torn forever from flesh and blood.

It is not clear that this really happened, but it makes a great set-piece. And the accounts that treat European timekeeping as a progressive, secularizing abstraction can offer plenty of other classic moments. Take the wonderful Reformation-era statute promulgated in Wolfenbüttel, which advised the citizenry that the ringing of the hours from the church clock was no longer to be confused (as in "popedom") with a call to pray to Mary (who "does not wish to have such an honor"), but would henceforth indicate merely the hour. Here, surely, is the birth of "meaningless" time.

Or take an instance dear to historians of science: it turns out that if you think of a "day" as the period of time that intervenes between twice having the sun directly overhead, then a "day" varies in length as the seasons change (if you are measuring it with a clock). What this means is that if you are keeping clock-time, and your neighbor is keeping time with a sundial, then your neighbor will show up sixteen minutes early for supper in late October, and, worse, fourteen minutes late in February. Astronomers had understood something of this from the medieval period on, but it took the rise of precise pendulum clocks in the seventeenth century before the detailed relationship between "solar time" and "mean time" (that of the clock) could be worked out, and represented mathematically in something called "the equation of time." The tectonic significance of this discovery deserves emphasis: the sun no longer kept time, but people "corrected" it with clocks. Time, one might want to argue, was leaving the world behind, and the clock was the cause of it all.

A fair bit of the stuffing in these kinds of stories has been inserted by those interested in setting up a straw man to beat the stuffing back out of. A somewhat nostalgic critique of abstract time—of that disembodied "clock" time—has been around for quite a while, long before the critical machinations of post-modern science studies. Henri Bergson, at the turn of the twentieth century, began a blistering assault on the temporal conceptions of modernity, arguing that, in effect, the only *real* time was the "duration" of the present—the experienced time of being itself. Neither philosophers nor scientists, he asserted, had ever taken the present seriously. To the contrary, modernity had

Señor Quevedo pictures the brevity of his own life, and how nothing seems to have lived

"So! Life . . . ?"
Nobody there?
Fortune's chewed
my years off
Madness
hides the hours
now

Who's strong enough
to know
where
youth, health
fled?

Life's gone away
Memories crowd up
Evils
walk about me

Yesterdays: done
tomorrows not yet here
today
hurls itself
on a point

I am I've been
Ile be
a tired
Is

Today, tomorrow, yesterday
I knot diapers
to shrouds

and endure:
a cavalcade
of deaths.

Allen Tice

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turned this portion of time—the time in which we all lived—into nothing more than the razor's edge between the past and the future. (Arriving an hour late for a North American interview, Jorge Luis Borges is said to have pointed to the clock on the wall and announced: "Man made the clock as an extension of his sense of time, now he confuses the clock with time itself. We of the South reject this: the time that things occur is real and reliable; clock-time is a fantasy, highly variable, not to be trusted.")

The Story of Time, omnivorous, tries to engage with this sort of time-thinking in its section on time as "experience." Here one finds the most haunting exhibit of all: a set of Christmas self-portrait stereo-postcards taken by a German couple in their modest *Kleinburgher* parlor every year between 1900 and 1945. To be able to survey the passage of a life in this way is a moving experience, even setting aside the sociological interest afforded by the couple's efforts to represent the historical events of each year: a proud map adorned with flags in front of the Yule-tree in 1915; heavy coats to show the shortage of fuel two years later. It is a pity that the book has reduced the full suite to a mere eight (non-stereo) images. One loses the sense of flow.

And the flow is relentless. It is the governing irony of this tale that the very profusion of time imagery, time devices, and time stories seems to work, perversely, to reinforce the relentless passage of plain old time itself. Both the book and the exhibit go to great lengths to present a fabulous and exotic colonial garden of time, culled from a pan-human expedition and all transported to Greenwich for delight and instruction. Yet the subtle, powerful, and submerged narrative of scientific time—that inhuman passing, indifferent to our efforts to scent it, color it, and render it in music—*that* kind of time whispers through Greenwich, the ancient home of the time's science: *Et in arcadia ego*. Hustled out of the closing exhibition by shade-like guards, I found myself on Bourdin's fateful path, in the sun, under the observatory, feeling mightily depressed.

V.

Walking up the hill for a peek at the observatory itself left time for reflection on yet another irony of the history of time. For in these precincts, where one can see the original "time ball" atop the observatory towers (the forerunner of our New Year's ritual at Times Square, the Greenwich time ball has dropped at 1 PM daily, since 1833, as a signal to ships in the Thames needing to set their chronometers), it is difficult to forget that most of the technical innovations that led to the increasing precision of mechanical timekeepers—and hence, it would seem, to an increasingly abstract, disembodied notion of time—were actually the product of efforts to solve a hugely concrete and worldly problem, the problem of longitude. Readers of Dava Sobel's popular book *Longitude* glimpsed a bit of that story: how the impecunious, self-taught loner named John Harrison succeeded where the great minds of the eighteenth century had failed, building a clock rugged enough to take to sea and accurate enough to maintain the time to within seconds over an extended voyage. This device mattered a great deal to a nation beginning to think of itself as the center of a global empire, because before it there was no reliable way for captains out of sight of land to say how far east or west they had gone. This led to unfortunate surprises.

The marine chronometer helped change all that. After setting the clock to tell Greenwich local time (that is, to keep track of the sun's position with respect to Greenwich), the navigator could sail away. When curious, he observed the local time wherever he ended up (by observing, say, the sun's position in the sky), and then compared it with Greenwich time as shown on the chronometer. The difference could be expressed in minutes, but those minutes of time implied a distance

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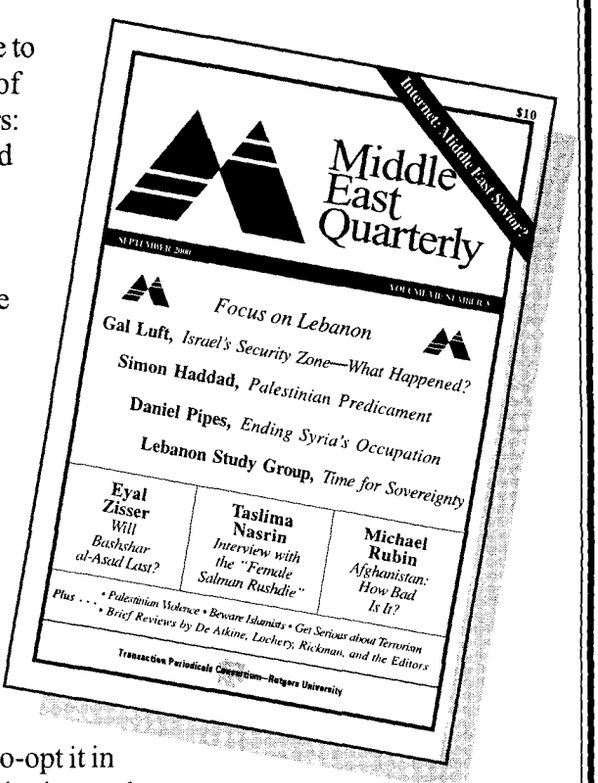
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in degrees. After all, the Earth sees the sun turn around the sky once in 24 hours; which is 360 degrees in 24 hours, or 15 degrees an hour. Is your chronometer one hour ahead of local time? You are 15 degrees west of Greenwich.

NOT THAT ANYONE had to use Greenwich. Longitude is a relative measure, so the choice was in this sense arbitrary, even if natural for Britain, given the status and the equipment of the Royal Observatory. Other countries used their own national observatories for most of the nineteenth century. In 1884, when delegates from twenty-five countries gathered at Washington, D.C. to try to settle on an international prime meridian, Greenwich was by no means a shoo-in. A newspaper in Louisville wanted to know why the United States should "concede to John Bull's dull Greenwich the position of time dictator? Now what is Greenwich to us? A dingy London suburb." The very idea repelled the French, and hence the Gallic representatives went on at length about the need for a "neutral" and "scientific" zero line for time and maps, rather than an embarrassingly "national" (and non-French) one.

The transcripts of the subsequent debates provide an engaging testimony to the entanglements of time, science, and abstraction. What was wanted was a neutral line, and at the same time a meaningful line, a line weighted with a landmark on the ground, and preferably also a line with some historical significance. How about the top of the pyramids? The British did not kindle to the idea, or to any of the others: the island of Ferro, the summit of Teneriffe, the Bering Strait. Anyway, the British delegates started to argue, what is neutral anyway? Nothing, not even units of measurement themselves. Consider the meter, pointed out the (pro-Greenwich) American delegate: it is French! These debates (which the British won) are interesting precisely because they offer a glimpse of how hard it was to take the profoundly abstracted concept of scientific time—neutral clock-time—and to fit it back onto the actual earth of dirt and water and history.

At the top of Greenwich hill I sat for a while and watched tourists try to do the same thing. The "real" prime meridian, used for the current system of Universal Time, is a statistical composite, an abstraction. So it no longer corresponds exactly to the line laid in the pavement in front of the observatory, a line that has been gussied up (a digital clock reading to hundredths of a second, a laser, a vending machine that imprints the current time on a souvenir certificate) into a sort of time-shrine. Yet this blurry fact is nowhere made clear enough to undermine people's enthusiasm as they confront this phantom boundary of time and space.

"OK, you get in the East, and I'll get in the West..." Photos followed. One small boy stood cautiously aside: "Now what do I do?" His father suggested he straddle the line. Panic, tears: "No! No!" People arranged themselves to step across the line in tandem, or sought to be photographed in "limbo," leaping above it. They stood on it as if it were a rhino, recently dropped on a strenuous safari. They set their watches, reading the inscriptions of the longitudinal distances to far-off cities: Colombo, Canberra, Port Stanley. One couple took off their shoes. In sum: people were orienting themselves.

It is a word charged with forgotten meanings. "Orientate," from the Latin *oriens*, or East, is a term derived from the participle of the verb "to rise." It comes down to us as the word for "figure out where you are" because of the medieval cartographic tradition of organizing world maps around Jerusalem. Yes, the East was where the sun rose, but Jerusalem was where Christ rose, and where his second coming was to be expected. In those highly schematic medieval TO maps (named thus because they look like a T inscribed in the letter O, and because those letters are the abbreviation for *Orbis Terrarum* or "earthly disk") spatial directions and Christian eschatology occupy the same ground. The garden of Eden and apocalyptic images often sit side by side on these maps, which are really cosmological diagrams. Indeed, one of the most significant places where such spatio-temporal cartographies can be found is in the most important tradition of apocalyptic interpretation in southern Europe, as illustrations in commentaries on the Book of Revelation compiled by an eighth-century Spanish monk called Beatus of Liébana. To find one's "place" in the European tradition has never been wholly separated from knowing where and when time begins and ends.

How durable were these ideas? Very durable. Shortly before the international meridian conference in 1884, a few visionary souls proposed pulling everything together by defining the new, global, scientific prime meridian as a line through Jerusalem (or Bethlehem). Their proposals did not get very far, but one can admire their fervid syncretism. After all, we date the era (awkwardly, and, it turns out, inaccurately), to an event that ostensibly occurred in Judea; and so each year, each day, they reasoned, ought to begin there.

The precision instruments of Greenwich prevailed, but the notion of a "birth" at the start of time still clings to the line. The strangest thing marking the secular time-shrine on the prime meridian in Greenwich is the sculpture placed at the edge of the observatory terrace. The steel construction stands about ten feet high and most closely resembles an enormous, shining gyroscope, set on an aerodynamic tilt to the north. The rakish axis has an indisputably phalloid air about it, as it juts out over the vista. And yet the artist, Christina Garcia, has balanced this celestial tool with an equally blatant cosmic yoni: two moon-like flanges of scimitar gleam and together create a mandala of void into which the "axis of space and time" can pass.

AS I TOOK this in (lamenting that the perennial gendering of linear and cyclical time had come to this), a small boy arrived on the scene, surveyed the form, and made a beeline for the origin of the universe, diving gleefully into the breach. One might see this as a reaction both natural and deeply grounded in history: parturitions, after all, lie at the origin of many a creation story, not least at the incipit of Christian time. Such travails turn up at its end as well. Probably the most ghoulish image in *The Apocalypse* is Matthias Gerung's mid-sixteenth-century woodcut entitled "The Birth of the Antichrist," which presents a full-frontal obstetric depiction of a claw-footed mother yielding the "son of perdition" to the light of day: he is being pulled from her body in a halo of flame by a pair of horrid little devils who have wedged their feet against the pudenda in order to get more purchase on their savior. Christian time, Gerung reminds us, begins and ends in a nativity.

The boy's father was inured to the larger mytho-theological significance of his son's enthusiasm, seized him, cuffed him, and returned him to his stroller. And this was fitting. Time, in the dominant European figuration, is most often depicted as a father—"father time," gray-bearded, stern, wise, ever ready to discipline ludic and sensual irruptions. Those aspects of time that looped about, like seasons, could be gendered as female, but the relentless time that marched ahead was an old man. Not that he was wholly sterile. According to a tidbit of Greek wisdom preserved by the second-century Roman jurist Aulus Gellius: *Veritas filia temporis*, "truth is the daughter of time."

It was a formulation of great power, dear to the early church, rendered into allegorical paintings and sculpture in the Renaissance, and later secularized by the practitioners of the new sciences. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Giambattista Tiepolo made it the subject of an extraordinary ink sketch, called "Father Time Revealing Truth." In Tie-

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polo's image, a heavy-winged old man, kneeling somewhat awkwardly, has his massive arms around the disrobed torso of a radiant young woman, whom he appears to be helping up onto a globe set into the clouds. A putto averts his face as he lifts a sun to shine on the scene. It will give some sense of the ambiguity of the scene to learn that the drawing was for a while mistakenly titled "Time Abducting Beauty." He may be revealing her, and putting her on top of the world, but he may be pulling her down, or carrying her off. He may be up to something else entirely.

Every once in a great while an image will seem to capture, in a few lines of sepia wash, the fullness of what thought can offer. "Father Time Revealing Truth" has that power. The portrayal of truth as the offspring of time does more than simply invoke a kind of straightforward intellectual optimism—the hope that the truth will out, eventually. It also expresses the subtle idea that absolute truth must, somehow, be beyond time, external to it. Now here is a deep notion. When we speak of "the truth," we seem to be speaking of something beyond corruption, outside of change, something not subject to time. The "truth" always seems to mean things seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, from an eternal point of regard.

Perhaps it is possible to come up with a concept of truth that does not imply a concept of eternity, but it would be a much less familiar notion than the way Plato spoke of the truth in his timeless realm of forms, or the way Dante depicted meeting God in the final canto of *Paradiso*, or even the sort of truth sought by the scientist interested in "eternal laws." This is a strange thing, because no one, as far as we know, has been outside of time and returned to tell us how things appeared. And yet, again and again in the West "truth" works out to imply "true forever," "true beyond time." In this odd way, different theories of knowledge each contain, however hidden, different theories of the end and edges of time. Think of epistemology as the Trojan Horse that smuggles eschatology through the gates.

Giumbattista Tiepelo, "Father Time Revealing Truth," c. 1755-60

Tiepolo's drawing depicts this. Here is an iconography of the way to truth that at the same time portends destruction. He will raise her, and he will devour her. Was there ever a difference? Suddenly things made sense. The passing of time is death; the passing of time is truth. What follows? If time is death and time is truth, then truth is death. And here, finally, lies the enduring power of the apocalypse: the ultimate truth and the ultimate destruction come together. The word itself, notably, comes from the Greek term for "the unveiling."

It was in this way that the seventeenth-century English mathematician Joseph Mede read his Book of Revelation: he used it as a tool for understanding the world around him, and he deployed his geometrical sensibilities when it came time to fit the text to life, doing an intricate compass-construction diagram of "The Ende" to illustrate his book, *The Key of the Revelation*. This was not occultism, this was rationalism, and it inspired Newton's later work on the Apocalypse and the Book of Daniel. Did Newton think of this work as distinct in method or truthfulness from his investigations into celestial mechanics? Not at all. Of apocalyptic truth he wrote that a "naturalle man ... might perceive the strength of it with as much perspicuity and certainty as he can a demonstration in Euclide."

Time, destruction, truth. The early modern period saw a vogue for *memento mori* watches—pocket timekeepers in the shapes of skulls, sometimes festooned with biblical imagery. There may seem something quaint about the way that the early clockmakers tried to hold together these elements that we now, for the most part, think of as easily separable. Time is an abstract flowing, free, in itself, from any particular significance, monitored by maniacally precise scientific instruments that are also without symbolic import. That is the truth. Destruction is unrelated. Greenwich Mean Time ticks on, announced by the familiar sound of the "six pips" at the hour, on BBC radio. These beeps are the transmission of time only. They are not meant to invoke the six pips that Persephone consumed in Hades, the six pomegranate seeds that bound her to the realm of the dead. The six pips are just a ticking sound in Greenwich; this is scientific timekeeping.

And yet, time and death still tap in step. In one of the middle rooms of "The Story of Time" sits a gray metal box about the size of an apple. It is considerably less visually interesting than the Breguet double-pendulum long-case regulator that ticks with breathtaking beauty beside it. This gray box is the timing device from a "chevaline" nuclear warhead, a timekeeper meticulously designed by some of our finest minds to ensure that a Polaris missile would detonate just above ground level, maximizing thermonuclear devastation. A fallen angel from the world of astronomy, indeed. The science of time has not yet brought us the perfect detonator, but it has brought us the best ones we have, and they are very good indeed. Conrad's Professor would be proud. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Comic Relief

EARLIER THIS SUMMER, A friend and I helped the movie *X-Men* gross $54 million on its opening weekend. Because we went to a Saturday matinee, I was concerned that we might be surrounded by swarms of children. Crucial bits of dialogue (or sound effects), I feared, would be drowned out by the cacophonous roar of snickering teenage voices, popping gum, and crinkling candy wrappers. But it turned out I needn't have worried. The audience was almost entirely adult.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SURPRISED. In the 1950s, comic books played such a central role in children's lives that the Senate Judiciary Committee investigated whether they encouraged juvenile delinquency. But today, contrary to public perception, the vast majority of comic-book readers are between the ages of 18 and 34. This is partly due, no doubt, to the books' prices, which have inflated dramatically in recent decades. Twenty-five years ago, comics typically cost about 25 cents; today, they range from $3 to $6 apiece. And, even if a kid has the money, comics aren't always easy to find. Grocery stores, toy stores, and drugstores, all of which carried comics in the past, rarely stock them now. And the number of comic-book stores (which were never that prevalent in the first place) has fallen from 10,000 in the mid-'90s to fewer than 4,000 today.

PERHAPS AN EVEN BIGGER REASON kids aren't buying comics is that they no longer seem to be written for an adolescent audience: today's Spider-Man is middle-aged and married, Batman struggles as hard against his aching bones as he does against the forces of evil, and other characters seem similarly designed to appeal to an older audience. And so, despite a boom during the late '80s and early '90s—when DC Comics briefly made Superman cool again by killing him off (and then resurrecting him), and the *Batman* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movies brought on a temporary whirlwind of publicity—the industry has been in decline. With fewer and fewer new readers, comic-book sales have plummeted from $850 million in 1993 to only $275 million last year.

THIS NEWS IS UNLIKELY TO UPSET parents, who generally still see comic books as a diversion from what their children *ought* to be reading. In fact, the truth is often just the opposite. Today, comics are more likely to substitute for the latest shoot-'em-up video game or Adam Sandler gross-out flick than for *Robinson Crusoe*. And, even compared to other forms of reading, comic books more than hold their own: a 1993 study published in *The Journal of Child Language* shows that the average comic book introduces children to nearly twice as many new words (defined as those not among the most commonly used 10,000 words) as the average children's book and more than five times as many as the average child-adult conversation (even, I suspect, excluding onomatopoeic comic-book standards like "snikt," "thwap," and "kaboom!"). The illustrations and simple sentences that parents dismiss help struggling youngsters build confidence in their reading ability, making them more likely to become lifelong readers. It's no coincidence that a 1992 study of 210,000 students from 32 countries found that Finland, the nation with the highest proportion of comic-book-reading students (59 percent), also has the highest literacy rate (99 percent) and the highest rate of library usage. These kinds of studies take on even greater significance given a recent spate of research suggesting that boys—comics' overwhelming target audience—are falling further and further behind girls in reading skills. Perhaps parents and teachers should listen to Nobel Prize-winner Bishop Desmond Tutu, who once recounted, "One of the things I am very grateful to [my father] for is that, contrary to conventional educational principles, he allowed me to read comics. I think that is how I developed a love for English and for reading."

COMIC BOOKS PROVIDE ANOTHER generally overlooked benefit as well: heroes. Anyone who has read comics, especially lately, knows that comic-book superheroes are not perfect. They're human beings (albeit ones with cool special powers), and they make mistakes. But unlike, say, the World Wrestling Federation, comics posit a moral universe that values (and rewards) attributes other than braggadocio and bullying, a universe in which characters struggle for "truth and justice" against tremendous odds. Historically, comic books have also promoted an appreciation of social diversity, creating heroes from groups that society considered nonessential. In the 1950s, *Wonder Woman* comics presented a then-radical picture of female equality; likewise, in the '60s, *Powerman* and *The Black Panther* depicted black heroes at a time when almost none existed on television or in films. Comic books even featured disabled heroes decades before other media did. Masked crime fighter Daredevil was also Matt Murdock, a blind lawyer; the X-Men, a heroic band of mutants (whose social status as outcasts allows for a number of social parallels exploited in the new movie), were led by Professor Xavier, a wheelchair-bound scientist of supreme intelligence and wisdom.

BUT THE BEST THING ABOUT COMIC books may be the most obvious: They're fun for kids to read. Growing up in suburban Ohio, I didn't read many books—but I devoured comics. I remember borrowing issues of *Richie Rich* and *X-Men* from my older brother and then, once I grew older, bicycling with him and his friends to a nearby store called the Paperback Junction. A small, musty establishment with only one room for comics, the Paperback Junction—or PJ's, as we came to call it—altered the course of my life. I went there nearly every week during my grade-school and early teenage years, buying old and new issues of *Daredevil* and *X-Men*, trying to piece together the romances, the feuds, the characters' backgrounds and desires—in short, setting myself up for a love of literature without even knowing it.

IT'S BEEN SEVERAL YEARS SINCE THE Paperback Junction was replaced by a beeper store. And last week, while visiting a comic-book store for the first time in several years, I learned that my favorite comic, *Daredevil*—one of the most literary comics I ever read—is now published only sporadically. It's still possible that the comic-book industry could revive itself. The movie *X-Men* might rekindle kids' interest in comics, and this month Marvel Comics will launch Ultimate Marvel, a line of comics that reintroduces superheroes like the X-Men as twenty-first-century teenagers, which could make them more appealing to young people. But there may be a dark lining to this silver cloud: Marvel Comics has been subsumed under something called Marvel Enterprises, which boasts of its plans for more comic-book-based movies, TV programs, and online animation. Reading the company's website, I felt I was glimpsing a grim future: a future where comic-book heroes continue to live but comic books no longer do.

BRIAN GROH

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All Kids Need School Choice

by Prof. Howard Fuller

When Americans cast their ballot November 7, each will get one vote, regardless of race, income, religion, or gender.

The story is different when it comes to choosing where our children attend school. There, a canyon divides America. On one side, with few educational options, are low-income parents, mostly of color. On the other side, with many choices, are middle- and upper-income, mostly white parents.

Writing for The Brookings Institution in 1999, Jeffrey Henig and Stephen Sugarman stressed that parents with adequate income can live near high-quality public schools or enroll their children in private schools. In contrast, many poor families simply "have no choice at all."

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Vice President Gore and Texas Governor Bush both have said that they understand why many of these parents want more educational choices. Indeed, school choice is long-standing and highly valued — by those who have it.

All that is new is a debate about whether low-income parents also should have the power to pick a public or private school they think is best for their children.

With this message, the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) enters the debate about parental school choice.

BAEO is a new group. Its network already reaches thousands of Black people, from all points on the political and ideological spectrum. They live in 35 major cities and 28 different states, where active BAEO chapters are being formed.

BAEO believes Americans need to know more about the positive impact of parental school choice.

In future messages, we will explain who uses school choice and why they value it. We will share inspiring stories from Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Florida, where low-income parents can choose a public or private school for their child and give their kids the help they need to learn more and succeed in school and life.

A new school year is beginning. Most parents have chosen where their children will go to school. All parents deserve that choice.

baeo
Black Alliance for Educational Options

Professor Fuller is President of the BAEO Board of Directors. Fuller is a former superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools. He founded and directs the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University where he is a Distinguished Professor of Education.

for more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org

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KIDS & TOBACCO

Kids should not smoke. Nor should they have access to tobacco products. We believe there is broad agreement on this important issue.

At Philip Morris USA, we are committed to dealing responsibly with the complex problem of underage smoking. There is no single, easy answer to this issue. Many experts suggest the best way to address underage smoking is through broad-based, integrated approaches that include communications, education, community involvement and access prevention.

As part of our commitment to play a role in reducing underage smoking, we have created a Youth Smoking Prevention Department whose sole purpose is to develop and support programs to help reduce the incidence of youth smoking. We've dedicated significant resources—over $100 million last year—toward initiatives based on the key components listed above. We are spending another $100 million against these initiatives in 2000.

Our effort includes support for school-based programs, one of which has been recognized for prevention excellence by the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other national organizations. We're also running national advertising campaigns: one that encourages kids not to smoke, and one that urges parents to talk to their kids about not smoking.

To help prevent minors' access to tobacco products, we support and help fund the Coalition for Responsible Tobacco Retailing's nationwide "We Card" retailer education and training program. This effort has helped train over 500,000 retail store employees to reject attempted purchases by minors.

Working to help prevent youth smoking is important and it's the right thing to do for our company and for our employees. It's also the right thing to do on behalf of our shareholders and our adult customers. Everyone has a stake in solving the problem of underage smoking. At Philip Morris USA, we are working to help find answers.

For more information about our youth smoking prevention efforts, visit our Web site at www.philipmorrisusa.com. If you don't have Internet access, please call 1-877-PMUSAWEB.

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